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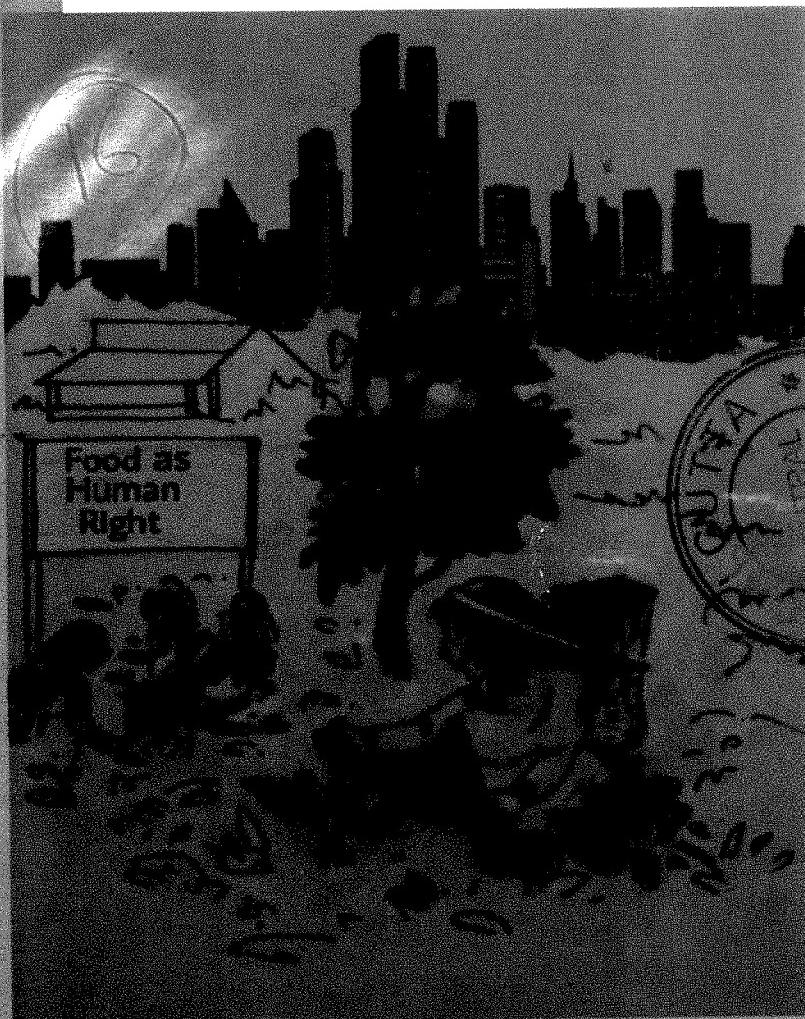
The Calcutta Journal of Political Studies

New Series

Vol.1

2017

Powerscapes in Postcolonial Contexts



**Department of Political Science
University of Calcutta
2017**

THE CALCUTTA JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

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Professor, Department of Political Science

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Department of Political Science

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The Editor.

The Calcutta Journal of Political Studies.

Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta (Alipore Campus)
1 Reformatory Street, Kolkata-700027. E-mail: samirdascu@yahoo.co.in

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Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta).

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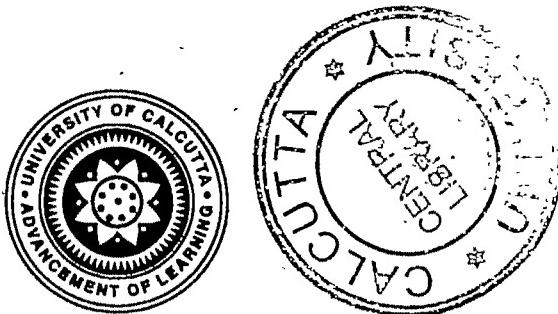
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Editor: Samir Kumar Das

Editorial

Publication of this number marks the 50 years of the Department of Political Science. Our Department established in 1948 began literally as an intellectual backroom for the exploration into studies in the Constitution of India and Constitutional Law. I heard first-person accounts from a few of D.N. Banerjee's students who could remember the frequent phone calls he would receive from Prime Minister Nehru asking for his advice on the finer of points of the Constitution and Constitutional Law. Interestingly the dominant tradition of Constitutional-legal studies could not quite overshadow the albeit minority tradition of Marxist writings within the same Department. By the late-1960s, the hitherto well-entrenched tradition of Constitutional-legal Studies suffered a double assault mainly from two quarters: Behaviouralism and Marxism. Marxism started gaining ascendancy with the effect that the Department is reported to have received a memorandum from a section of students demanding its greater incorporation in the curriculum thanks to the peasant and student movements that rocked various parts of the country and the world. While Constitutional-legal studies was increasingly being discarded, Marxism and Behaviouralism – though epistemologically two poles apart – seemed to have reached a secret understanding with at least a few in the Department taking Marxism more as a set of hypotheses that can be empirically tested much in the same way as Behaviouralists do. The few Behaviouralists on their part would try to reach apparently 'Marxist' findings ironically through the Behaviouralist route. Of course there were notable exceptions amongst the members of the faculty. But as students growing up in the rather unexciting decade of the 1980s, we were as it were caught in this quandary. Much later of course, as new teachers joined the Department, the ice could be broken with its exposure to newer developments in different branches of Social Science. While students were exposed to a variety of methods and theories, the Department lost in the process its distinctive research focus as it happened in case of almost all other Departments in India. It passed through the same crisis that Political Science as a discipline was passing through for a considerable period of time in this part of the world.

This number of *The Calcutta Journal of Political Studies* is a modest attempt at presenting a bunch of writings by a group of young colleagues under the broad theme of 'Powerscapes in Postcolonial Contexts'. It has three sections: the first section seeks to provide an update on the Department while the second section

presents four articles on the theme. The third section entitled 'Debates' contains short and sharp comments from some of the leading social scientists reflecting on the concept of post/coloniality. We will feel rewarded if the number is found to be of some value to the reading community. I am grateful to my colleagues for their kind cooperation and thank Kaberi and Anindya in particular for having helped me in the editorial process.

Samir Kumar Das

Introducing the Department: A Brief History

Kaberi Chakrabarti

In the backdrop of independence and Constitution making processes in India, the Department of Political Science started its journey in the College Street campus of the University of Calcutta in 1948. The founder-head of the department was the eminent constitutional expert Prof. D.N. Sen. In the first two decades, the department evolved with a focus on political philosophy, legal and constitutional studies in teaching and researches under the leadership of scholars like Prof. R.C. Ghosh, Prof. N.C. Roy. The late 1960s witnessed eruption of volatile social movements worldwide. The state politics was also passing through turbulent phases with radical movements and establishment of the United Front governments. The vibrancy of the period and the academic debates in the West made its way into the academic ambience of the department. During this period, the students proposed important inputs towards reframing of the curriculum in the department keeping in tune with the pressing needs of the hour. In the subsequent two decades, focus on teaching and research shifted to Marxian and Socialist studies, Behavioural and empirical analyses. Eminent scholars like Prof. Buddhadev Bhattacharya, Prof. Rakhahari Chatterjee, Prof. Mohit Bhattacharya, Prof. Bangendu Ganguly, Prof. Mira Ganguly, Prof. Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Prof. Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, among others, contributed in establishing the academic and research orientation of the department since 1970s. The scope of teaching and researches in the department gradually broadened incorporating the shifts and challenges in the academic and social spaces with greater focus on interdisciplinary approaches. In 1988, the department was shifted to the newly built Alipore campus with four other social science departments. In late 1990s with a major revision in course content, contemporary debates were introduced with inclusion of post-colonial studies, postmodernism, policy studies, gender and feminist studies, communication and media studies, migration and displacement studies, human rights, public health and environmental studies, etc. in teaching and researches. Curricula upgradation and researches emphasise on the interface of democracy, development and governance.

Shifting Framework of Teaching

The department runs three distinct programmes—post graduation (Master of Arts), M. Phil. and Ph.D. Basic courses at post graduate level integrate rigorous exercise of theoretical debates with focus on contemporary empirical and policy researches. Optional papers like Research Methodology, Contemporary Indian

Politics and Society, Socialist Thought and Practices, Comparative Politics, Local Government and Politics have been introduced at the post graduate level. Students are required to write dissertation in some of the optional courses engaging with different qualitative and quantitative research methods like field work, survey, documentation, At M.Phil. and Ph.D. levels students are encouraged to work on interdisciplinary themes and cutting edge research areas.

Since 2009, the post graduate syllabus has been changed into a course based structure with each paper based on four distinct modules. Students are evaluated on basis of internal assessment and final examination. For each course, students are encouraged to present term papers along with the conventional system of written examination. On a regular basis, the teachers encourage students to present their observations and opinions through class presentations. Students are sometimes encouraged to prepare a course through group presentation. From 2017 the M.Phil programme will be divided into four semesters. The first two semesters will be based on course work and in the second year two semesters will be evaluated on basis of term paper and dissertation. Ph.D course work has also been introduced in the department. Syllabus and course structure revision at the post graduation level towards introduction of choice based credit system are currently under process in the department. The framing of curriculum poses a challenging task for the department as it caters a huge number of students from different sections of society with different levels of linguistic, socio-cultural and economic background. On an average twenty per cent students are admitted from other universities, who come from neighbouring districts, distant ones like North Bengal or often outside the states like from North-eastern states, Sikkim, Orissa and Bihar.

Interdisciplinary Focus

Cross-disciplinary focus in teaching and researches is one of the distinctive areas of the department that has grown stronger since 1990s. It is reflected in inter-departmental and inter-university faculty exchanges in teaching the courses. While teachers from departments like Economics, Philosophy, Sociology and Education of this university are associated as guest faculties, teachers from Political Science are serving as visiting faculties in Philosophy, Women's Studies Centre of this university, IDSK and in other universities like JNU, University of Hyderabad, Jadavpur University, Presidency University on regular basis.

Interdisciplinary focus is reflected in individual and collaborative researches also. The teachers collaborate with departments like Anthropology,

English, Women's Studies, Foreign Policy Studies, Film Studies, Economics, etc. of this university and other universities in their individual projects. They are engaged in research collaboration with various regional, national and international institutions at their individual capacities. The department organized tri-university collaborative seminars with Presidency University and Jadavpur University under the DRS programme. It held tri-departmental public lecture on *colonial cartography* with departments of Archaeology and History, University of Calcutta, in November, 2016.

Collaborative Programmes

The department completed two phases under SAP (during late 1980s and early 1990s) with thrust area on Eastern and North Eastern regional politics. The department is currently under the UGC-SAP with thrust area on *Democratic Governance*. DRS Programme started in the department in 2006. The thrust area of Phase-I (*Democratic Governance in Indian States*) and that of Phase-II (*Democratic Governance: Comparative Dimensions*) of the DRS Programme has been successfully completed and it was acclaimed as 'one of the best run' DRS Programmes in Political Science in India by the UGC. Under the programme, the department has been able to publish two edited volumes, about twenty five monographs on various dimensions on democratic governance, conduct collaborative policy researches like research on Ganges river erosion, policy interface with different civil society organizations. National seminars, students' seminars and undergraduate teachers' seminars have been organized under the programme. The DRS programme has facilitated incorporating major inputs in teaching and broadening the scope of individual and collective researches.

The department nurtures international collaboration as well. It has recently signed a MOU with the University of Glasgow as one of the four partners of the University of Calcutta in November, 2016. The department serves as the Associate partner in the Erasmus Mundus Programme of Human Rights Policy and Practice facilitating teachers' academic exchanges with leading European universities. Teachers are also engaged as visiting faculties in international institutions.

As part of academics-society interface, the department on several occasions has engaged itself in policy interface with different civil society organizations like Pratichi Trust, SHIS, Ramkrishna Mission Lokshiksha Parishad towards mutual sharing of knowledge. Representatives of these organizations along with the departmental faculties spent day long brain-storming sessions or field visits to deliberate over collective knowledge. The inputs of such interface have been generated as important sources of policy based researches.

Visiting Faculties

For last few years, eminent scholars like Prof. Samir Amin, Prof. Partha Chatterjee, Prof. Itty Abraham, Prof. Achin Vanaik, Prof. Taimur Rahman, Prof. Monoranjan Mohanty, Prof. Nivedita Menon, Prof. Aditya Nigam, Prof. Rajen Harshe, Prof. Ajay Gudavarthy, Prof. Priyankar Upadhyay and others have visited the department and delivered special lectures. In recent years national seminars were organized by the department on themes like media and democracy, democracy, governmentality and development, democracy and non-state actors.

The department, with a limited strength of faculty, has been able to produce a strong body of academic knowledge with some of the faculty members leading the respective research areas at the national level.

Students and Scholars' activities

The academic vibrancy of the department has always been sourced from the students of the department. They are a very active component of the department taking part in academic activities like organizing seminars and workshops. The postgraduate students run a departmental wall magazine, *Mirror*, which reflects their critical observations on the contemporary issues of politics and Political Science. The department has introduced a unique system of student feedback by meeting with the student body in general with all faculty members present on regular intervals where students raise any issue of their choice. This deliberative practice has enhanced trust in the student-teacher relationship.

The postgraduate students take part in annual departmental seminars, students' seminars under DRS programme mentored by the teachers. Some of them attend seminars at national and regional levels as well. On 9 September, 2016, the Department, in association with the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India, organized the Group level contest for the National Mock Parliament contest. Students of the department, along with other departments of the Calcutta University participated in the contest and bagged special award from the Ministry. Sheshadri Sanyal, a second year student, has won the Women's Singles and Doubles State Badminton Championship in West Bengal in 2016. Students commemorate Hiroshima Day, Human Rights Day in the department beyond their routine activities. The department recently organized the day long Young Researchers' Colloquium for the M.Phil. and Ph.D. level researchers.

Beyond everyday academic activities, the teachers and students of the department are engaged in various outreach activities that help to connect them with greater society. For quite a long time, the students and teachers of the

Kaberi Chakrabarti: Introducing the Department

department are associated with building the *Sunderban Sramajibi Hospital* in Sarberia, Sunderban. The hospital, located in the southernmost fringes of West Bengal, caters to the needs of utterly impoverished rural population lacking facilities of basic health in the nearby area. Along with a group of dedicated health workers, students of the department of Political Science, mentored by the senior teacher Prof. Satyabrata Chakraborty, are engaged in building and expanding the hospital to facilitate right to health of the rural people.

Future Plan

The department is looking forward to renew the third phase of DRS Programme. It would be the culmination period of researches on democratic governance collating the theoretical and empirical knowledge gained so far with a possible critical closure. From the coming session, the department is going to reframe its curricula at the post graduation level with an intention of allowing more academic flexibility in teaching. Greater thrust will be given to policy advocacy and facilitation in researches.

Tibetan Buddhism and Geopolitics in Postcolonial Himalayas: Contestation, Domination and Negotiation

Jigme Yeshe Lama*

The Himalayas are a region where varied cultures have coexisted with each other leading to the formation of unique socio-cultural systems, which are a combination of Hinduism emanating from the south and Tibetan Buddhism coming from the North. The region is a site of cultural syncretism, which formed civilizational frontiers that had its own unique sense of sovereignty. They exercised their own sovereignty but were also seen to be providing tributes to either Nepal and/or Tibet with much influences exerted. Hence, for a section of the population in the Himalayan belt, Tibet, especially Lhasa was a power centre both in religious and socio-political terms. However, with the birth of the nation state in the Indian subcontinent and China, the earlier forms of sovereignty in the Himalayan regions were superseded by its authority. The newly emergent postcolonial states of China and India also led to the eventual colonisation of a number of communities in the Himalayan region. This research paper will look into this eventual transformation of sovereignty practices in the region, drawing upon the ideas of sovereignty as propounded by Susanne Rudolph. It will also delve into the significance of Tibetan Buddhism, which forms power centres in the Himalayas and its impact on the geopolitics of the region. More importantly, the paper will also focus upon the interaction between traditional ideas on sovereignty and the modern state system through a lens of residual formations as propounded by Raymond Williams, seen in the modern state translating its power in the region through a negotiation/accommodation with the Tibetan Buddhist elites.

Keywords: Sovereignty, Himalayan borderlands, Tibetan Buddhism, post colonial.

The mid 20th century saw the emergence of a number of new nation states following a wave of decolonisation. It gave birth to an independent state of India in 1947 and the People's Republic of China in 1949. Subsequently, the post colonial states of India and China started mimicking their former colonial overlords and deploying the language of a "state" which has its roots in the west. However, both are civilizational states, sharing a rich past and who also from 1951 started sharing a long contested border, after the People's Liberation Army of communist China had purportedly "liberated" Tibet. Thus, Tibet which was till then a functional theocratic state under the aegis of the Tibetan Buddhist elites, having its own unique sense of sovereignty was subsumed in the nation

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta.

state of China. On similar lines we see the encroachment of the Himalayan belt by the modern state, converting these civilizational frontiers into modern day boundaries demarcating the nation state(s). The region is also a “contact zone” between people from multiple cultures and was an important part of the fabled “wool trade” route between Tibet and South Asia. While the region and its population is still in the process of becoming a part of one of the handful of modern states currently active, we do see the presence of the “pre modern” elements of sovereignty which brings forth a new form of dynamism in the region. Furthermore, the interaction between traditional sovereignty and the modern state system can be understood in the form of the modern state translating its power in the region through a negotiation/accommodation as well as contestation with the Tibetan Buddhist elites.

This was recently seen to be reflected in January 2000, when a young teenager Ogyen Trinley Dorje who had been recognised as the 17th Karmapa arrived in India, escaping from his monastery in Tibet and from the control of the Chinese state. The Karmapa is the head of the *Karma Kagyu* school of Tibetan Buddhism, one of the many traditions present in Tibetan Buddhism. The escape elicited a series of responses from the exiled Tibetans, the party state in China and the Indian state. The Tibetans in India and other Buddhists from the Himalayan region were elated, while the Chinese government then in a last ditch attempt to salvage its reputation (after having lost a major Tibetan lama) clarified that the Karmapa had gone to India to claim his precious ‘black crown’—one of the most prized possessions of the Karmapas kept in Rumtek monastery in the Indian state of Sikkim, after which he would return to the fold of his motherland (Khortsu 2013: 11). The Indian state saw his escape in rather doubtful terms and initially tagged him as a covert agent of its rival in the north. Matters did not help either with a number of rival claimants to the throne of the Karmapa, with a few having some degree of support from a section of the Indian state. The Karmapa was not permitted to visit outside India till 2008 and his movements were much monitored. Furthermore, in early 2011, the police raided his makeshift headquarters in *Gyuto* monastery, Himachal Pradesh and seized nearly 1 million US dollars in cash. Also, one of his assistants was caught while delivering a huge amount of cash to some Indian businessman, allegedly to buy land for a monastery to be built in Himachal Pradesh. The Indian police also subsequently insinuated that the Karmapa was a “Chinese agent” who had been termed as illegally possessing foreign currency which was later acquitted by the courts (Khortsu 2013: 18).

It was not only a section of the Indian security apparatus that was attacking the Karmapa but it was also much of the Indian media that was insinuating

him of being a Chinese agent. What had further aggravated the situation in 2011 was the seizure of large sums of Chinese currency from the monastery of the Karmapa, which was read by the Indian security agencies and the media as a continuation of his linkages with China and reaffirmed for them the earlier idea of him being a Chinese agent (Chellaney 2011). The Karmapa's escape from Tibet which was dubbed as being relatively easy was seen with much suspicion and the idea that China might be funding the Karmapa as a plan to influence the Karmapa's *Kagyu* school, which controls important monasteries along the militarised Indo Tibetan border (Chellaney 2011). The escape of the Karmapa in 1999-2000 was termed as being staged by the Chinese as he remains one of the first reincarnates who was recognised by the atheist Chinese state. Some of the reasons for "staging" the escape of the Karmapa includes a need to strengthen his claim to the title at a time when his rival who is termed as being backed by important interests in India, Bhutan and Taiwan was seen to be gaining ground over the Kagyu order, which is believed to have assets worth over 1.5 billion US dollars (Chellaney 2011). While this reflects an aspect of the hysteria which was created by the media and the security agencies over the Karmapa issue, a significant idea which has been iterated above is the idea of "rival claimants" to the institution of the Karmapa, which reflects the presence of divisions among the Tibetan Buddhist elites that will be elaborated further in the paper.

While the Karmapa is just one reincarnate among the hundreds in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy, who are religious elites and who have escaped to India or are seen to be present in the Indo Tibetan Himalayan borderlands, holding spiritual sway over millions of Buddhists along this region. Prior to the formation of an independent nation of India and the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Himalayas were regions that had its own unique form of sovereignty and state systems which did not adhere to the modern notions of a nation-state. The region had the presence of local chieftains or kingdoms such as that of Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan, Mustang and Tawang, which exercised their distinct sovereignty but were also seen to be providing tributes to either Nepal and/or Tibet. There was thus much influence from either Lhasa or Kathmandu, which was translated through cultural and religious terms. For instance, Tawang in modern day Arunachal Pradesh in India was under the influence of Lhasa through the Tawang monastery. Similarly in Sikkim before its incorporation into India in 1975, the rulers of the tiny Himalayan kingdom had strong ties with Tibet, whereby the Dalai Lama was considered to be the spiritual head of the royal family and also there were strong matrimonial linkages between the royals of Sikkim and the Tibetan nobility. The last king

of Sikkim; the *Chogyal's* mother belonged to an important family from Lhasa (Duff 2015: 16).

In a number of cases the sovereign ruler is seen to be holding both temporal and spiritual powers; the example of the Dalai Lama's lineage being most prominent in central Tibet. This was also seen in the context of the isolated Himalayan Buddhist kingdom of Mustang, whose last ruler, Jigme Dorje Palbar Bista was both a temporal and a spiritual leader to his local community. The kingdom of Mustang had been annexed by Nepal in the 18th century but the local ruler had been allowed to retain his title. The kingdom and its community shared cultural and linguistic affinity to Tibet and during the 1960s the local ruler had allowed the region to be used as a base of operations for the CIA funded Tibetan guerrilla forces; the *Chushi Gangdruk* (Agence France-Presse 2016). What is significant is the way through which there was a process of sustaining sovereignty by the more powerful sovereign over the component regional kingdoms, which can be termed as one among the many forms of integration worked out by other Asian empires (Rudolph 1987: 731). In this context, in multiple cases sovereignty is somewhat exercised through socio religious norms based on Tibetan Buddhist values. Hence in the context of the Himalayas we see the presence of different forms of polity which adheres closer to the form of trans-ethnic empires or continental polities and an absence of a unified sovereignty, which is the core value of the nation state. Hence we see the presence of a differentiated zone of socio-political plurality in the Himalayan zone (Shneiderman 2010: 294).

The Himalayan kingdoms reflect the idea posed by Susanne Rudolph, where suzerainty or minimal control was extended by a dominant power (Rudolph 1987: 736). In these regions one can see the presence of self regulating groups, which had certain links to the centre through giving tributes or through a weakly specified ritual sovereignty. The ritual sovereignty was derived through Buddhist values whereby a number of Himalayan kingdoms not only saw Lhasa as their cultural centre but also emulated certain practices followed by the ruling elites in the Tibetan capital. Furthermore, ritual sovereignty is designated through cultural activities, symbols and processes that in the absence of instrumental mechanisms nevertheless create a domain, a realm (Rudolph 1987: 740). Through the Buddhist cosmological world in the Himalayan region, Lhasa and the Tibetan reincarnates used to exercise a form of ritual sovereignty in the region. This symbolic sovereignty is a phenomena which was much prevalent before the advent of the nation state in the Himalayas. However even in the modern period, a degree of the symbolic sovereignty exercised in the region in the form of the cultural religious matrices of power is seen to be present.

This is seen to be present in the Tawang region in India's northeast, which till 1951 paid taxes not only to Tawang monastery but also to Lhasa via Tsona *Dzong* (Tenpa and Mizuno 2015: 50). Even Sikkim's independent status till 1975 was due to the fact that like Bhutan, its position vis a vis India in 1947 was different. It was seen to be sharing strong religious ties to the theocracy of Tibet even though in 1935 it was admitted to the Indian 'Chamber of Princes' by the British Raj (Duff 2015: 25). Therefore, in the post independence context of India with majority of the erstwhile princely states being incorporated into the newly independent India, Sikkim was a lone exception. A standstill agreement was signed between the two on 27 February 1948, which stated that existing arrangements would continue (Duff 2015: 35). Furthermore, the Himalayan region has numerous Tibetan Buddhist monasteries which in the case of Tawang, Sikkim, Ladakh and Bhutan date back to centuries and had strong ties to Tibet. In Sikkim three monasteries belonging to the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism were built during the lifetime of the 12th Karmapa (1703-1773); in Ralang, Rumtek and Phodong (Khortsa 2015: 81). These monasteries like their counterparts in Tibet enjoyed considerable power and influence and were landed estates. For instance, in Sikkim the monasteries of Pemayangtse, Ralang, Rumtek, Phodong and Phensang were ones with landed estates (Balikci 2008: 43). The power of the monasteries is also further attested by the fact that the Britishers during the late 19th century had brought Nepalis in Sikkim as a part of a mass programme as they believed that 'Hinduism will assuredly cast out Buddhism and the praying wheel of the Lama will give place to the sacrificial implements of the Brahman' (Duff 2015: 33). In a number of cases as mentioned earlier monasteries also extracted taxes from the local population. With a huge section of the population following Tibetan Buddhism, the monasteries played an important role in not only providing religious services but also in shaping the ideological makeup of followers. They also provided education to the locals and were therefore involved in the shaping of the consciousness of the local population. However what is also significant is the understanding that the Tibetan Buddhist cosmological world is not a single monolith as there is the presence of diverse worldviews and philosophical practices which gets reflected in the different schools and their affiliated monasteries. While there are four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the pre-Buddhist *Bon* (Shamanistic) religion, their presence is seen to be strewn across the Indo-Himalayan borderlands.

Tibetan Buddhism and Power in The Himalayas

Tawang monastery in Arunachal Pradesh is affiliated to the *Gelug* (Yellow Hat) school of Tibetan Buddhism, to which the Dalai Lama belongs and which had held the reins of power in Tibet till 1951. Many of the monasteries in Bhutan

and Sikkim arose out of the religious conflicts in Tibet in which the defeated schools, *Nyingma* (Red Hat) and the *Kagyu* schools were driven to the regions of Sikkim and Bhutan where in many cases they received royal or local patronage. For instance in Ladakh, all the four major sects have flourished and through the patronage of kings, monasteries were given land and other support. During the late 12th–13th centuries, the king of Ladakh compelled the Ladakhi monasteries to send their novices to Central Tibet for training and advanced studies at the monastic universities there, a practice which continued till 1959. Also apart from the *Gelug* monasteries of Rizom and Samtenling, the rest were founded by those who came from Tibet. The founding of monasteries continued till 1834, after which Ladakh no longer remained an independent kingdom (Tsering Nawang 2009: 160). What is equally important is the fact that Ladakh being an integral part of India has a strong influence of and from Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet, with the term “Indian Tibet” being applied to Ladakh by the 19th century Moravian missionary and scholar Rev. AH Francke. This is also seen in the fact that Ladakh is a living repository of Tibetan religious and cultural life (Tsering Nawang 2009: 157) and also became an important centre for the proliferation of Tibetan Buddhism when around AD 840 the Buddhist king of Tibet was assassinated by followers of the Bon religion who placed their candidate Langdarma on the throne in central Tibet that led to the persecution of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet (Tsering Nawang 2009: 160).

In Ladakh we also see the presence of a sharing of power between the secular and spiritual individuals during the 16th century as witnessed through the spiritual and material development of the region under the King Senge Namgyal and the Lama Tagshon of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism (Tsering Nawang 2009: 162). Even in the 20th century with the Chinese takeover of Tibet and the subsequent flight of the Dalai Lama along with tens of thousands of Tibetans, which included numerous high ranking lamas, they were offered patronage by a number of communities in the Himalayan region. For instance, the *Chogyal* (monarch) of Sikkim had invited the 16th Karmapa to reside in Sikkim, which was eventually accepted by the latter. The Karmapa built his monastery on a 74 acre plot granted to him by Tashi Namgyal, the then *Chogyal* of Sikkim. The construction received funding from the Sikkim government, the Indian government and individual sponsors (Khortsu 2013: 81).

Even the current Karmapa, who as mentioned earlier has been much doubted by the Indian security agencies in February 2001 after his escape into India, was accorded a very warm welcome by the representatives of the Himalayan tribes of India and also by the Chief Minister of Sikkim, Pawan Kumar Chamling, who expressed the hope that the Karmapa would visit the

Rumtek monastery built by his predecessor in Sikkim (Khortsa 2013: 95-96). The demand for the Karmapa's return to Rumtek monastery has been a central theme in the tiny Himalayan state of Sikkim, with there being a number of claimants to the throne in Rumtek and the monastery being caught in a violent schism between rival factions in the 1990s. The Karmapa issue is a reflection of the explosive mixture between power and spirituality in the Indo Himalayan borderlands, whereby the spiritual teachers of Tibetan Buddhism have used their intricate connections in the web of power in modern India to gain an upper hand against each other. While there is negative fallout in the process, with the credibility of the Karmapa being questioned but it also provides one with a view of the power and influence of Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs in the Tibetan world of the Himalayas. It is also a reflection of the natural exercise of ritual sovereignty practiced by the reincarnates. Till the advent of the modern nation state and modern forms of sovereignty, the ritualistic modes of sovereignty were important phenomena which regulated the social system in the Himalayan world.

An important way through which Tibetan Buddhism and its elites have maintained power in the Himalayan borderlands of India and Tibet has been through a process of incorporating local cultures and practices in the fold of Buddhism. This is seen in the context of Sikkim, where "Buddhism became Shamanic and Shamanism became Buddhist", created in 1642 by three visionary Nyingma lamas who had entered into Sikkim fearing persecution in Tibet and had enthroned Phuntsog Namgyal, the first *Chogyal* or king in Yuksom, entrusting him with both temporal and spiritual powers (Balikci 2008: 23). These lamas converted the local Lepcha communities who practiced Shamanism by co-opting their local deities and sacred geography into Buddhism. Much of the syncretic process was initiated from the 17th century but the Buddhacisation of Sikkim was never completed and is still an ongoing process of which the most recent phase is seen as a "revival" and has been fuelled further with the arrival of Tibetan *Rinpoches* and highly knowledgeable lamas from Tibet who settled in Sikkim and other Himalayan regions from the late 1950s fleeing persecution from China.

Tibetan Buddhism in The Himalayas in The Post 1959 Period

With the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1951, the age old Buddhist theocracy in Tibet came to an end. Although from 1951–59, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Tibet attempted at creating a united front with the traditional ruling elites in the Tibetan areas whereby they initiated a process of co-opting the religious clergy and traditional aristocracy in the ruling structure. Under this,

Mao's China had strong desires to grooming the religious hierarchs like the 14th Dalai Lama and the 10th Panchen Lama. This is clear from a speech given by Mao to the Constitutional Draft Committee in Beijing where he emphasised on the need for the Dalai Lama to manage Tibet and that his position would be equivalent to his having being elected by the people. The Chairman also stated on how Tibetans' faith in the Dalai Lama is immense and hence there was a need to respect this faith of the Tibetans (Goldstein 2014: 20). This can also be termed as a mode of gaining consent from the Tibetans through their ruling elites, creating in the process "organic intellectuals" who would aid in the Chinese administration of Tibet. This process is quite similar to the interaction of traditional sovereignty in the Himalayas (including Tibet) and the modern state systems which have led to a process of incorporation of traditional elites, which will be looked into further in the paper. However by the late 1950s this formula of power negotiations between the modern communist state of China and the Tibetan traditional elites started developing cracks which culminated in the failed uprising by Tibetans on 10 March 1959 that subsequently led to the flight of the Dalai Lama into exile in India. A reason for the uprisings by Tibetans and the Dalai Lama along with thousands of Tibetans coming into exile has been due to a failure in the process of incorporation of traditional sovereignty forms in the modern nation state, specifically of China. It can be deemed as a failure of the modern state in comprehending the traditional ritualistic sovereignty, which is seen to be a norm in the Inner Asian Highlands and the Indo Himalayan borderlands. Remnants of the traditional sovereignty forms is still seen to be much prevalent in these regions and especially in the context of the Himalayan borderlands has further accelerated with the entry of numerous Tibetan Buddhist masters who have made these areas their homes in exile and also aided in the revival of Tibetan Buddhist practices.

It is important to note that in most cases the Tibetan Buddhism in the Himalayan belt as termed earlier in the context of Ladakh or Sikkim had been much propagated by Buddhist masters who arrived from different parts of Tibet or in varied cases local students from the region went to study in the monasteries in Tibet. This becomes clear when in the aftermath of the quelling of the revolt of 1959, a large contingent of monks residing and studying in the three great monasteries of *Sera*, *Ganden* and *Drepung* who had been arrested by the Chinese had to be set free as they were Indian citizens belonging to the regions of Lahaul, Spiti or Ladakh (Gyatso 2002). However with the coming of prominent Buddhist reincarnates in the region from Tibet, much change has been witnessed. In Sikkim, major contributions to Sikkim's Buddhist

development took place through the activities of those lamas who arrived in the region after 1959. They established major monasteries and educational institutes in the area such as the Karmapa's Dharma Chakra Centre at Rumtek, which was initially meant for Tibetan monks but eventually had a profound influence over the minority Kagyu villages of Sikkim. From these villages, young novices have been sent to these institutes where they have received new educational alternatives that gained popularity for the personal achievement and career advances it brought with them (Balikci 2008: 64). In a number of instances, the multiple local communities residing in the Himalayan borderlands have donated their monasteries to the Tibetan lamas whether it is the Tamang, Sherpa or Yolmo communities in the Darjeeling hills or the Bhutias and Lepchas in Sikkim.

However as mentioned earlier, the reincarnated lamas and monasteries have emerged as informal power centres. This has been understood through a realist lens whereby in the aftermath of the escape of the 17th Karmapa into exile in India, which has been described by a section of the security establishment as a security threat to the country. He has been dubbed as a pro China lama who will be installed in an important monastery that has strong influence on the mostly Buddhist population in India's Himalayan state Sikkim as well as the neighbouring regions. This is seen as a part of a grand strategy adopted by China whereby they are termed as deploying pro Chinese lamas' religious influence to increase Beijing's strategic influence in the Himalayan region. According to the inputs by Indian intelligence, pro-Chinese lamas have been active in Indian states bordering China, the Buddhist populated part of Kashmir and most of north-eastern Arunachal Pradesh and also in Bhutan and Nepal. Furthermore no less than 11 monasteries in these regions are headed by lamas who are seen as Chinese protégés (Stratfor.com 2001).

This particular securitisation of the Tibetan lamas in the Himalayan borderlands of India and China is an important narrative which has been bolstered further by a number of steady narratives emerging from a section of the Indian state apparatus as well as from academic institutions which favour a more realist approach to issues. There will be an elaborate enunciation of this towards the end of the paper. While this realist understanding of the factor of Tibetan Buddhism in the Himalayan regions of India reveals the extent of influence the lamas have in the area, it also signifies the idea of the periphery in the psyche of the nation, a region where nation building is still in process and where there is the presence of the alternative forms of sovereignty whose roots can be traced to before the advent of the nation state. Furthermore, much of these regions do not conform to the logic of the nation state and thus remains

outside the domain of the modern state. Hence the rational state is seen to be viewing much of the activities of the Tibetan lamas with suspicion as they believe that their charisma and teachings can be used to undermine the Indian state's authority (Stratfor.com 2001). A similar view is held in the PRC, which believes that there is a strong need to control the reincarnates inside Tibet as their loyalty can be dubbed as being more towards the Dalai Lama, who in turn is termed as an agent of India and the West. This reductionist understanding fails to comprehend the traditional matrices of power and influence in the region, which does not fit into the paradigm of the sovereignty of the nation state.

The power and influence exerted by the reincarnated lamas in Tibet is seen to be somewhat comprehended by the modern atheist Chinese communist state in 2007 when it issued 'Order Number 5' titled "Management measures for the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism", (www.cecc.gov 2007) whereby a set of specific rules and criteria were enunciated by the State Administration for Religious Affairs, a department under the State Council through which they have attempted to regularise the reincarnates. Through this, the reincarnates have to remain within the bureaucratic control of the modern nation state, which is seen to be taking over the reins of responsibility over traditional institutions. The PRC is also seen to have brought out a digital list of approved reincarnates of Tibetan Buddhism which is aimed at regulating reincarnation issues and to prevent duplicitous individuals from posing themselves as reincarnates. On the other hand, the post colonial nation states of China and India are seen to be indulging in a process of incorporation of these religious elites which can be understood better through the idea of the residual formations as propounded by Raymond Williams, whereby the modern is seen to be utilising certain aspects of the traditional to make sense of a space that is yet to be completely modernised.

Tibetan Buddhist Elites and Emergence of 'Civil Society'

The Tibetan religious elites in numerous pockets of the Indo-Himalayan region are seen to be involved in a number of socio philanthropic activities that ranges from providing healthcare services to the local population to engaging in ecological protection. For instance, the head of the *Drukpa Kagyu* school which is a sub-school of the Kagyu tradition; *Drukchen Rinpoche* is well known for his "*padyatras*" or peace marches, whereby the participants are also involved in planting tree saplings. On similar lines has been the activities conducted by the 17th Karmapa, who is still under the scanner of the security agencies. The Karmapa as a spiritual leader emphasises on the monastic community to play an active role in environmental protection and take the lead in reversing the

present trend of extensive ecological degradation (Khortsa 2015: 148). The current Karmapa is seen to be inspiring monks to become agents of environmental protection as majority of them come from the Himalayan region, which in recent years has faced the brunt of environmental degradation. He is seen to be boosting environmental protection by disseminating it through the medium of education, for which he set up an environmental group *Khoryug*, which is seen to be working with the WWF (World Wild Life Fund) to hold seminars to educate monks on a range of topics, including biodiversity (Khortsa 2015: 149). A number of monasteries such as the *Druk Samten Choling* monastery in Darjeeling used to run a primary school that offered secular education to the young novices and the local population. The monastery also runs a clinic named *Gampopa* clinic, which offers basic medical facilities that includes a fully equipped laboratory and also a dentist offering services to the local population at a minimal rate. The monastery's medical team along with their monks are also seen to be undertaking mobile medical units to remote villages and tea estates in the district of Darjeeling. Traditional Tibetan medicines have become much popular in India among mainstream Indians as a number of clinics run by the Tibetan Government in exile or by private Tibetan doctors have opened in a number of metro cities such as Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai. A large number of clinics have been opened in the Himalayan region especially in areas where refugee settlement camps are present. However, these traditional medical clinics are seen to be catering to other communities also. Significantly, Tibetan Buddhist practices are deeply embedded in Tibetan medicinal practices, with a large number of Buddhist masters and lamas being prolific medical practitioners.

Hence, Tibetan medical practices are seen to be providing healthcare services to the larger sections of the Indian population. Through the introduction of such services, the Tibetan Buddhist elites are seen to be stepping in the domain of the civil society in India. The above mentioned services are to be logically provided by the state but with liberalisation and the subsequent so called "withdrawal of the state", these spaces can be termed as being filled by the civil society. Hence the civil society derives a degree of legitimacy from executing such services to the community in which they are based, which can be seen in the case of the Tibetan Buddhist institutions present in the Indo-Himalayan borderlands. Therefore, the religious bodies are seen to be performing secular activities, which further leads to an increase in their power and influence. However a more direct manner through which much of the reincarnated lamas and monasteries exercise power is through a process termed as "mandalisation", which is a tantric ritual framework that brings about a

process of civilising or taming the region. Through “mandalisation”, the region is conceived of as a mandala, with the monastery and the reincarnated lama termed as the centre. Hence through this rather masculine activity, the lama is seen to be taming local deities and protecting his subject (Makley 2007: 33). This is seen in the context of the Indo Himalayan borderlands where a number of local deities such as Mount Kanchenjunga, a deity of the local Lepcha and Sikkimese tribes has been tamed and turned into a deity under Tibetan Buddhism.

Along with the taming of the local deities and the extension of mandalisation, the Tibetan Buddhist lamas also collaborated with the secular leaders in the region to gain further power. This is made much clear in the context of the monasteries in the traditional Tibetan Chinese borderlands in northeast Tibet such as the famed Labrang monastery, whose main lamas collaborated with Mongol and Manchu leaders in efforts to garner the loyalties of Tibetan and Mongol tribal alliances. It was also beneficial for the secular leaders as through the reincarnated lamas and their monasteries they could comprehend the region and the population better. In this context, the most successful Tibetan reincarnates were those who learned to mediate competing interests while carving out privileges and relative autonomy for their monasteries and estates (Makley 2007: 39). Hence we see the deployment of the ritual sovereignty in the context of the Tibetan Buddhist elites in the Asian highlands as well as in the Himalayan region. Furthermore we also witness a form of co-option of the ritual sovereignty by secular powers during the early periods through which they were able to secure their power and authority especially in the frontier regions which occupies a “luminal space” and the state building is seen to be “still in process”.

Securitisation and Accommodation of Tibetan Buddhist Elites

The advent of the modern nation state is seen to have brought profound changes to an understanding of sovereignty, territory, power and state itself. Older forms of sovereignty such as the ritualistic form(s) are incomprehensible to the modern state and are generally seen to be viewing them in deplorable terms, with much mistrust and strong suspicion. Such an understanding of the role of Tibetan Buddhist elites has been adopted by a section of the Indian security establishment as well as by certain think tanks and academicians associated with them. In their study there is a strong tendency to show the impact of Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhism on the national security of the country (Gautam 2012: 6). They see the Himalayan frontiers as being strategically important for Indian national security and also a need to groom the Tibetan lamas to bolster Indian security and position in the Himalayas (Gautam 2012: 159). Some

authors are of the strong view that the influx of Tibetan Buddhist elites in the Himalayan region has severe repercussions for India's security as much of the monasteries in the region have come under the control of these elites, whose loyalties are at best dubious. They believe that Beijing is deploying Tibetan Buddhism as an important tool of influence, especially in the Himalayan belt. This is generally done through gaining control over vital Indian monastic institutions through the shadowy influence of Tibetan cultural control or connectivity (Stobdan 2016). There is also a belief that the coming of the Tibetan Buddhist leaders to India has caused serious disarray among the Indian Mahayana community and has affected the growth of an indigenous Buddhist leadership in India (Stobdan 2016). Such an argument fails to consider the age old linkages between the Himalayan borderlands and the Tibetan Buddhist institutions based inside Tibet which has been elaborated earlier. These ideas simply ignore the complex historical and dynamic relationship present between the Himalayan zones and Tibet, which cannot be comprehended by the modern day nation state and its adherents.

They also believe that with a resolution of the Tibetan issue in favour of the Tibetans with China, these reincarnates and monks will sway the population and the region in favour of China. The Dalai Lama is also suggested to not interfere in the domestic matters' of India, albeit a reference to the Dalai Lama's earlier statements on Kashmir as well as on the Dalits. Still in a number of instances, we have seen the modern state indulging in an act of co-option of the Tibetan Buddhist elites with an aim to further their own legitimacy. This is seen as mentioned earlier in the context of 1950s Tibet China relationship but is also witnessed in the post Deng period, where a large number of former Buddhist elites were rehabilitated and also granted the earlier power and prestige which they enjoyed. In numerous cases they were elevated to official positions in a variety of state and semi state institutions such as the Political Consultative Conferences, an advisory body in China. Through this, the religious elites are seen to be exercising relative autonomy for themselves and thus indulge in religious as well as philanthropic activities for their community, which does lead them to enjoy a certain degree of legitimacy. In a few cases, the modern state is seen to be depending upon the reincarnates and the monasteries in resolving and preventing conflicts among local communities especially over grassland resources in the late 1980s and early 1990s in north-eastern parts of Tibet.

This form of authority can be understood in terms of residual formations, elaborated by Raymond Williams through which the modern state tries to understand the non modern zones, where traditional sovereignty is seen to be still existent (Yeh 2010:520). Hence there is a cooption of the Buddhist elites as

seen in this context, which is also much prevalent in the Indo-Himalayan borderlands, whereby traditional sovereignty of the Buddhist elites have been coopted through democratic means as seen through these elites contesting and winning elections in the region. For instance, the head of the monastery in Bomdila which was earlier in Tsona (Tibet) the Thirteenth *Tsona Gontse Rinpoche* was earlier elected as a Congress member in the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to the Arunachal Pradesh state assembly (Gautam 2012: 177). On similar lines *Bakula Rinpoche*, an important reincarnate from Ladakh had held several ministerial positions in the Jammu and Kashmir government and was later elected unopposed as Lok Sabha member from Ladakh for two terms. He also served as Indian ambassador to Mongolia from 1990 to 2000 (dailyexcelsior.com 2016). During his 10-year term, he played a significant role in supporting the revival of Yellow Hat Buddhism in post-Communist Mongolia and bringing the Dalai Lama to Mongolia to consecrate revived monastic colleges. He is also credited for aiding the Dalai Lama in arranging for his first official visit to Ulaanbaatar and subsequently helped arrange for further visits there and to the Buryat Buddhist community in the Soviet Union (Aldrich 2016). He was recognised as a reincarnate by the 13th Dalai Lama and is well known for his championing of modern education in Ladakh (Dasal 2016). While much of these monks are not Tibetan by nationhood, their culture and ethnicity can be deemed to belong to Tibet. Furthermore they are adherents of Tibetan Buddhism and proponents of traditional ritual sovereignty in the Indo-Himalayan region. In a number of instances the modern nation state is seen to be deploying the Buddhist elites as a strategic asset, which is seen in the recent context of the Indian government providing more space to the exiled Dalai Lama to counter China (Rajamohan 2016). Even the communist state of China is seen to be utilising the religious charisma of the Tibetan Buddhist elites in matters of diplomacy as seen in the visits of the Terith Panchen Lama to Nepal as a representative of the Chinese state in a Buddhist conference (Arjia Rinpoche 2010: 145). The Chinese state is also seen to be deploying the Panchen Lama along with other Tibetan reincarnates to Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and other Latin American countries as a part of an exchange program which did not have any religious overtones (Arjia Rinpoche 2010: 147).

As an organised religion, Tibetan Buddhism is not monolithic. It is highly diverse and has numerous divisions. In many cases these divisions were the source of conflict which got accelerated further with political power being exercised by the religious elites. Hence as mentioned earlier in the paper, the struggle for power among the religious schools in Tibet led to the fleeing of a number of religious masters of the defeated schools, who eventually resided

and propagated their teachings in the Himalayan borderlands. In many cases they received patronage from the local rulers and hence were able to build monasteries or other religious institutions. Even the *Gelugpa* school to which the Dalai Lamas belong and which was holding the reins of power in pre-1951 Tibet had assumed its superior position after defeating the *Kagyu* school as well as restricting the growth and influence of the other schools. They assumed power in the 17th century after the *Karma Kagyu* school were defeated in the hands of the *Gelugpa*'s who were assisted by their Mongol patrons leading to the ascendance of the Fifth Dalai Lama Lobsang Gyatso under whom the *Gelug* school gained control over a united Tibet (Nau 2007: 17).

In due course of time, the *Gelug* school forcibly converted many of the non *Gelug* monasteries. Hence, the history of Buddhist Tibet is deeply immersed in religious violence with the ultimate goal being the capture of power. However this came to an end in the 1950s with the modern communist state of China invading and dislodging the religious ruling elites in Tibet and eventually leading to the Dalai Lama and much of the religious figureheads to come into exile in South Asia. Still for a short period the earlier attitude of the former dominant school; *Gelugpa* continued as the early Tibetan Government in exile had strong leanings to this religious denomination. Furthermore, the period also saw the emergence of strong right-wing organisations such as the Three Provinces United Association or the *Cholsum Chigdril Tsogpa* which stressed on strong unity in the exile community, especially focussing on a unitary school of Tibetan Buddhism based on the leadership of the *Gelug* school. The initial period saw much tension among the numerous Tibetan Buddhist schools which also culminated in the formation of an opposition to the ruling order. However with the current Dalai Lama embracing a more ecumenical path with him practicing and adhering to all Tibetan Buddhist traditions as well as even promoting the pre Buddhist Bon faith in exile, the religious dissonance among the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism has been much reduced. Still in recent times, we see an emergence of some discord within the Tibetan Buddhist community. For instance in 2014, the head of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage brought out the issue of forced conversions of his monasteries in the Kailash region inside Tibet by the *Karma Kagyu* lineage, whose head is the Karmapa.

While the *Drukpa Kagyu* head did not implicate the current 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje, he does mention about a similar event occurring almost 15 years back when another *Drukpa Kagyu* monastery inside Tibet was forcibly taken over by monks of the *Karma Kagyu* and who according to him were aided by the Chinese (Gyalwang Drukpa 2014). Along with this, another significant contention that has arisen in Tibetan Buddhism and one which

particularly affects the *Gelugpa* school has been the opposition to the Dalai Lama by the followers of the Dorjee Shugden sect. The Dorje Shugden deity is among the numerous deities present in the pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism but is albeit a rather recent addition. However, the 14th Dalai Lama from 1995 onwards started discouraging the practice of worshipping this deity as it was seen to be fomenting strong sectarian divisions among the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Hence in opposition to this, the worshippers of the deity murdered the director of the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, Lobsang Gyatso in Dharamsala, India in 1997 (Nau 2007: 7). More importantly the Dorje Shugden followers have been recently protesting against the Dalai Lama during his public visits to the Western countries and according to a Reuters' investigation, the group has been found to have received financial support and backing from the Chinese state (Lague, Mooney and Lim 2015). All of the above cases reflect the idea of an absence of Tibetan Buddhism being a homogenous formation. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the controversy over the Karmapa continues. There are a number of claimants to the title of the Karmapa and it has led to violent clashes among their followers, which is another instance of the lingering tensions and presence of a power struggle within Tibetan Buddhism.

Conclusion

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The mid 20th century saw the emergence of new independent nation states in the form of The Republic of India and People's Republic of China, entities that had emerged after a wave of decolonisation had swept the globe. These post colonial nations have the distinction of being civilisational states, with a rich cultural heritage of having its own unique set of statehood systems and ruling principles. However, with them undergoing a phase of colonisation (informal in the case of China) they are seen to be adopting the statehood systems as propounded by their former colonial overlords. This is in the form of the Westphalian system of modern nation states, which consists of a unified, indivisible, sovereign state with centralised political authority (Behera 2008: 29). Moreover, the multicultural society that the newly emergent nation states of PRC and India had would be negated by a mechanical application of the idea of a nation state with its monolithic credo and unitary state structure. Furthermore, the whole process negated the diversity, humaneness and freedom that is fundamental to the plural culture in the region (Behera 2008: 29). However, to consolidate state power the nation states in the region are seen to have engaged in a process of negotiating political processes, which is also somewhat applicable and to an extent addressed in this paper, in the regions of the Himalayan borderlands of the nation states of India and China.

However as Shneiderman elaborates, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan remained independent of British rule, even though they did come under the ambit of the policy of the ‘Raj’. However these entities were not produced in the post colonial moment of rupture at partition but rather are products of long standing processes of negotiations between mobility, territoriality and sovereignty (Shneiderman 2013: 26). Hence whether it is the simple act of not purchasing animal fur by Tibetans inside Tibet due to an injunction from the Dalai Lama or not performing animal sacrifices through an intervention from the 16th Karmapa on a community in West Sikkim, we do see the presence of influence and a degree of cultural sovereignty being exercised by these Buddhist elites, which was one of the multiple norms present in the Himalayan region and which is seen to be ever prevalent in the age of the modern nation state. However, as mentioned in the paper, the modern state is seen to be indulged in negotiations with these ritualistic sovereign authorities to garner further legitimacy from the population and hence seen to be involved in the project of nation building.

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Fiscal Federalism and Economic Liberalization in India: Re-Imagining the Contours of Power

Avipsu Halder*

Fiscal federalism in Indian focuses on the distribution of financial powers between the Centre and the States. Also, it manifests the existing power relations between them. The paper tries to study the political economy of fiscal federalism in the post-liberalization context. In this endeavour, it tries to traverse as to whether any alternation has taken place in the distribution of financial powers. It is admissible that economic liberalization has provided greater liberty to states for attracting foreign investment without taking prior permission of the central government. Thus, the paper seeks to examine an alternative explanation of issues of autonomy and authority. It undertakes two important tasks towards to achieve its end. First, it explores the approach of Central government towards States for meeting the challenges of the global era. Secondly, globalization has paved the way for greater horizontal interaction among the provinces across the world. It substantiates this point by invoking the concepts of 'region states' and 'global city'. The former refers to states/province that has attracted adequate amount of foreign capital. The latter stresses that certain provinces within a country have become the nerve centre of global activities. Therefore, the paper concludes that state governments are important cog in enriching the financial pool of the country in the post-liberalized context.

Key Words: Federalism, FDI, Globalization, Goods and Services Tax (GST), Liberalization.

Introduction

The idea of federalism came into vogue during the colonial era under the Government of India Act 1935. This Act granted autonomy to the provinces (Schoenfled 1959: 54). However, the concept was still in its rudimentary stage. The doctrine consolidated itself in the post-independent scenario. The logic behind the approach was to promote the notion of decentralization of powers. In other words, it emphasized the division of powers between the Centre and States. Part VI of the Indian Constitution grapples with their respective powers. The demarcation of powers can be observed in the administrative and the financial domain. However, the paper focuses on the aspect financial jurisdiction of Centre and States (Basu 2003: 369). More importantly, the ramifications of economic liberalization on the centre-state financial relations are also manifested. The paper approaches this issue by engaging the theoretical

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta.

aspect of globalization. It is divided into four subsections. The first two sections focus on conceptualizing federalism and its fiscal dimension. The objectives are to understand the power configuration of the Centre and the units. The following section encapsulates the politics of the federalism by unearthing the manner through which the leadership at the Central level co-opted the States. In its final section, the paper traces whether economic liberalization has brought about any alterations in the existing centre-state relations. It manifests the possible shifts which may have occurred in the post-liberal era.

Visualizing the Pillars of Federalism in India

Before we undertake the task of delineating the features of fiscal federalism, it is essential to explore the basic tenets of the federal doctrine in India. The allocations of powers are made as per the provisions of the Indian Constitution. Nevertheless, an inherent discrimination underlies within them. The emergency provisions provide a classic illustration. Articles 352 (national emergency), 356 (state emergency) and 360 (financial emergency) (Basu 2003: 396) explicitly strengthens the arm of the centre *vis-a-vis* the States. These aforementioned Constitutional articles can be interpreted from an alternative dimension. It may underline the benevolence of the Central Government towards the States. In other words, the centre is trying to project a protective attitude towards the States. However, on many occasions, the Central government have made improper use of the Art. 356 thereby curbing the powers of the State government (Tummala 2007: 143). Hence, doubting the compassionate attitude of the centre may not be completely illogical. A similar disjuncture can also be noted in the realm of legislative and administrative relations. In this context, certain Constitutional articles shall be specified to substantiate our standpoint. Article 249 enunciates that Parliament can make laws on subjects of the state list for the cause of national interest (Gangal 1962: 250). Secondly, Art. 256 envisages that the States are empowered to exercise their power in the spirit of the legal arrangements of the parliament. Besides, the Centre can issue guidelines to States regarding the manner through which the latter ought to function (Tummala 2007: 141). Thirdly, Art. 265 manifest that if the States fail to comply with the directions of the Centre, the latter may conceive such a scenario as a malfunctioning of the state's Constitutional apparatus. This will eventually pave the way for the introduction of Art. 356.

These provisions emphasize the power equations between the Centre and the States. Two important aspects are worth mentioning. First, despite the allocation of the respective subjects under the Union, State and the Concurrent List as per the Constitution, the subordination of the States to the Centre cannot

be avoided. Moreover, in the Concurrent List, where both the Centre and the States can legislate, the former has overriding powers in case of any deadlock (Dash 2007: 699). Hence, the States have to operate under the parameters set to them by the Centre. Interestingly enough, the Constitution has also carved out exception in certain cases. The case of Jammu and Kashmir provides a classic illustration. Art. 370 of the Indian Constitution effectively illustrate this point. The state legislatures of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) have relatively greater voice (Tillin 2007: 52). It implies that it is difficult for the Centre to make encroachments into the domain of States. Therefore, the applicability of Art. 352, 356, 320, 249, 256 and 265 loses its relevance for J&K. However, this is a special case. Hence, it shall not be treated as yardstick for analyzing the dominant trends of Indian federalism. There is an inbuilt dualism in the operational dynamics of the federal structure. The aforementioned clauses of the Constitution stand in contradiction to the logic of decentralization. The Constitution framers seem to have unknowingly sown the seeds of centralization. In other words, discrepancy can be noted between theory and practice.

Fiscal Federalism: Exploring the Concept

Thus far, the paper has provided a general understanding of the federal polity. Let us turn our focus to the distribution of financial powers between Centre and States. The logic of decentralization can hardly be doubted. It ought to be mentioned that the Centre has played a caring role for ensuing the revenue earnings of the state. Hence, the financial relations deserved to be explored in considerable detail. Art. 268 envisage those categories where taxes are collected and appropriated by the States even though they are imposed by the Centre. As an adjunct this provision, Art. 268 A, sheds lights on those taxes which the Centre imposes but the proceeds are collected and acquired between them and States. Thirdly, Art. 269 hinges on taxes that are allocated for the States but are imposing and collecting them remains Centre's prerogative. Moreover, the Constitutional arrangements have allowed exclusive rights to amass revenue from the items enumerated in the State List (Basu 2003: 370, 372). These provisions reveal that the Central government is mindful of the needs and demands of States. Nevertheless, the flip side of the argument also needs to be unearthed. The Central government retains the residuary power of taxation. It has important implications for analyzing the Centre-States financial relations. It remains to be seen as to whether the distribution of financial powers resembles parity between the Centre and States.

Clause 275 of the Constitution entrusts the centre with the responsibility

to grant necessary financial assistance to the States for the latter's economic development (Singh 2002: 538). However, it is the Centre that decides which States are entitled to receive grants. In addition, the idea of discretionary grants in Art. 282 (Basu 2003: 376) throws up some interesting features. Firstly, there is no Constitutional compulsion on the Centre to allocate grants. Thus, it provides the Centre a greater bargaining power to supervise the development and the financial conditions of the States. Secondly, in a similar vein, the Centre can use States as means to materialize the broader national goals. Analyzing the respective financial powers of Centre and States highlights the inherent contradiction existing between them. Articles 268, 269 appear to argue a similar theme. On the other hand, Art. 275 and 282 resemble a contradictory standpoint. Against this backdrop, we can argue that the Constitution has accorded greater powers to the Centre for manoeuvring the financial powers of States. Put differently, the Constitution has simultaneously created a strong Centre despite attempting to make an effective division of powers between Centre and States.

Hence, a question becomes obvious. How do the states respond to such a scenario? The grievances of states regarding the existing federal arrangement found expression in the West Bengal Memorandum and Rajamannar Committee (Kumar 2005: 103). These resolutions were aimed to alter certain existing arrangements of the federal system. Both these proposals attempted to reverse those clauses pertaining to the Centre-State financial powers. There may be two possible reasons behind adopting such a stance. Firstly, the grants in aid to the States are made on the recommendations of the Finance Commission in Art. 280 (Bagchi 2003: 31). Secondly, the Planning Commission recommends the allocation of discretionary grants. Hence, in both cases the Centre considerably regulates the financial aspect of the States. The Rajamannar Committee demanded that Planning Commission ought to be done away with. Likewise, the West Bengal Memorandum expressed their grievance over financial issues. It demanded that around 75% of the total revenue of the Centre shall be given to the States. In addition, it vied for the abolition of the Concurrent List (Saez 2002: 79). They felt that as long as the overwhelming powers of the Centre prevails; it barely leaves the States with any bargaining power. They were in favour of transferring subjects from the Concurrent List to the State List (Saez 2002: 82).

The Central Government was also mindful of the growing disillusionment among the States. Hence, it responded to this situation by constituting the Sarkaria Commission (Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India, Official Website). It made certain key recommendations towards mitigating several

contentious zones in Centre-State relations. However, even these proposed solutions were yet to bring about any major breakthrough in the Indian Federal structure. Although it tried to cater to the needs of the States, yet those steps were far from curbing the overriding powers of the Centre. How? The proposals had both positive and negative aspects. In the former sense, it urges for the creation of an Inter-State Council (Art. 263) (Ray 1992: 148). Secondly, the earnings from the corporation tax shall be shared with the states. Thirdly, it stressed on the construction of Zonal Councils for upholding the federal spirit of the country.

However, there were other recommendations that were loaded heavily in favour of the Centre. It is worthwhile to explore them. First, it envisaged that the residuary powers of the taxation ought to be retained by the Centre. Secondly, it proposed that the both the Planning Commission and the Finance Commission should continue to operate. Thirdly, the National Development Council should be reconstituted as the National Economic and Development Council (NEDC) (Basu 2003: 386-387). These aforementioned proposals have given greater priority to the Centre. By arguing in favour of the Planning and Finance commission, it implied that both statutory and discretionary grants will be given to the States at the behest of the Centre. Moreover, giving greater focus on the NEDC tacitly strengthens the arms of the Planning Commission to supervise the economic developments of the States. The Inter-State Council could have been entrusted the responsibility for undertaking the fiscal transfers among the States. This would have reduced the State's dependence on the Centre. Also, the Centre would not have greater supervisory role. However, the Sarkaria Commissions may have overlooked these aspects. Hence, the bones of contention remain unresolved. It may be that as the Sarkaria Commission was constituted by the Centre, it did not want to make any radical suggestions that may jeopardise the advantageous position of the Centre. The Commission wanted play a balancing role between the Centre and States. However, the extent to which it was successful in doing so remains a matter of debate.

The major sources of revenue sharing are concentrated in the hands of the Centre (73 %). This is a basic point that shall be understood while exploring the dynamics of Centre-State fiscal relations. The States have increasingly found it difficult to generate adequate earnings from the non-tax revenue (Nambiar 2003:46). The distributions of financial powers have created discrimination not only between the Centre and States but also among States. Put differently, it refers to both vertical and horizontal levels of discrimination (Mukhopadhyay 2003: 63). The idea of vertical imbalances is not difficult to comprehend. On

the other hand, the differences between States propel us to focus on two indicators—per-capita fiscal capacity of the respective States and their per-capita receipts of grants. On this basis, States have been categorized into low-income, middle-income and high-income states. It is done on the basis of their per-capita receipts of grants. The per-capita receipts of poor states are Rs. 8850; the figures of the middle income states are Rs. 8700 (*The Hindu*, June 21, 2016). However, for the rich states, the figures were somewhat close to the middle income states. These figures depict an interesting picture. If we compare the economic position of states either in absolute or in relative terms, we find that the economic position of the rich states is getting augmented. In a similar vein, it is arguable that the gap between the rich and the poor States have widened.

Politics of Fiscal Federalism and the Indian Government

The constitutional provisions pertaining to the Centre-State financial relations have been dealt with. It has given us a structural explanation. However, understanding the political dynamics of the process shall definitely facilitate a more critical understanding. In this endeavour, two critical task needs to be undertaken. First, exploring the nature of the Indian state is essential. Secondly, understanding the logic of economic planning is equally worthwhile. Both these aspects facilitate to unearth the role of socio-economic variables in the Indian federal polity. The state apparatus in post-independent India focused on the economic development of the country (Chatterjee 1987: 88). The logic of economic planning emanated from this line of thinking. However, the state apparatus had to account for the dominant social groups. The class configuration came into vogue. The ramification of the classes on the functioning of the state apparatus had to be accounted for. In this context, two arguments can be proposed. First, these dominant classes get their interest fulfilled through the state despite not taking any direct part in its functioning. They tacitly influence the functioning of the state (Miliband 1969:66, 97). Secondly, the state can barely function in an autonomous manner. It is pertinent to identify the categories of the dominant social groups.

We refer to Pranab Bardhan's (Bardhan 2012: 40) idea of the 'dominant coalition' to substantiate our argument. Three classes are being identified—the industrial bourgeoisie, the rich peasantry and the technocrats. Let us explore the manner through which they exert their influence on the state. The big-business classes primarily focussed on extracting the necessary administrative clearance required to initiate their business enterprises. They use the state machinery as a means to pursue their larger objectives (Bardhan 2012: 40). Likewise, the

wealthy peasantry lobbies with the government to get favourable subsidies for their agricultural inputs. Thirdly, there is the technocratic section that constitutes the basic pillars of government's administration (Bardhan 2012: 46, 51). However, a similarity can be noted within the first two social groups. Neither of them directly participates in the affairs of the government. On the other hand, the technocrats/bureaucrats explicitly manage the affairs of the government. Nevertheless, the larger interests of all of them remain the same. Let us contextualize this logic in the domain of Centre-State relations. It can be argued that the presence of either of these classes, or all of them may have a bearing upon the economic development of respective States. In other words, those States which have a strong presence of these classes will be exhibit a greater level of financial prosperity. In a similar vein, both the industrialists and the rich agricultural classes are pivotal for capital generation (Byres 1997: 62, 64). Therefore, they became indispensable for the development planning of the State.

This point could be traced even in exploring the structure of the political parties in the Centre and in States. Before we delve into this point, it shall be remembered that the party-structure revealed a peculiarity during the formative stages of Indian democracy. Despite the presence of the several parties, all were being largely overshadowed by the Indian National Congress Party (INC). Not only did it dominate the Central leadership but also made its presence felt in many States of the country (Mitra 2009: 98). During this phase, the States merely served as administrative units of the centre. In this context, the idea of autonomy deserves to be dealt with. The term can be explained from the territorial as well as the administrative sense. In the former sense, it refers to a definite geographical area which is free from any external influences. The administrative connotation of the term is somewhat similar. It underlined a specific set of activities over which an administrative unit can act in an exclusive manner. However, this meaning seemed to bear little relevance for the States. They had little option but to follow the guidelines of the Centre. Why? A possible reason may be that the Chief Ministers of the respective States were virtually co-opted by the Central Congress leadership.

Such circumstances had a crucial implication. First, the States had to pay lip-service to the wishes of the Centre. As a consequence, they could not express their grievances regarding the existing arrangements of fiscal federalism. During the stage of one-party domination, a promising picture of the federal polity was being portrayed. The relations between the Centre and States were cordial. As the dominant social groups of the States operated in unison with the party leadership at the Centre, it minimized any chances of conflict of interest. The existence of the States had to be viewed through the lenses of

the Centre. Therefore, the States did not face any hardships in receiving statutory as well as discretionary grants. However, we need to look into the flip side of the argument in order to get a better understanding. Even during the era of single-party dominance, inequality among the States continued to persist. The economic positions of few States were remarkable while many other States barely revealed a pleasant picture. It is well known that India adopted a model of socialistic of planned economic development. Thus, the central government ought to control the major sectors of the economy (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987:212). It was exercised through the mechanism of the Planning Commission. The contribution of this body towards India's economic development is unquestionable.

Nevertheless, it overlooked some key issues. The Second Five Year Plan can provide a classic illustration. One of its positives was its stress for India's industrial development (Chakravarty 1987: 42). On the other hand, overemphasising on industrialization led to a gradual neglect of the agricultural sector. Let us discuss its influence on Centre-State financial relations. The agricultural sector belongs to the State List as per Part VI of the Constitution. It forms an integral part of State's revenue generation. Hence, those States whose agricultural sector was not adequately developed had to face the consequences. On the other hand, States with a rich peasant class (Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh) (Mitra 2009:158) remained unaffected. More importantly, their position went from strength to strength. Thus, these states were not only augmented their own resources but also achieved greater capability to bargain with the Centre. Two categories of States have emerged as a result of the idea of planned economic development. First, States which were either agriculturally or industrially developed and secondly, those that resembled positive signs on both sectors. However, it shall be mentioned that some states should have adequately focussed on the issue of land reforms. It may have given them another possible avenue for raising revenue.

This trajectory of Centre-State relation underwent a significant transformation with the demise of the Congress party both at the Centre as well as in States. Till this phase, the idea of power sharing could not be realized in effective manner. Under the changed scenario, regional political parties began to pressurize the Central government for extracting greater concessions for them (Manor 2001:80-82). A tendency developed on the part of the States to accuse the Centre for their economic plight. The proposals, as discussed previously, for altering the equations of the between the Centre and States came about during this period. The Centre's power to take major political economic decisions and to set broad policy guidelines met with resistance. In other words,

power both as ‘decision making’ and ‘agenda setting’ (Lukes 1974: 12, 7) has moved away from its uni-dimensional character. Moreover, this phase also witnessed the phenomenon of sluggish economic growth (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2000:74). Hence, the logic of planned economic development was beginning to raise many eyebrows. The faith that planned economy would eventually lead effective implementation of the Centre’s development programme in respective State’s began to wane off.

The Central Government failed to account for certain core aspects of economic development. It is pertinent to delineate them. Under the rubric of socialist planning, the Centre unknowingly sowed the seeds of capitalism. More importantly, it carved out legislations such as the MRTP Act to encourage the industrial big business (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 212). However, this measure possessed a drawback. The performance of the industrial bourgeoisie left a lot to be desired. Moreover, the idea of even development which the planners wanted to project failed to materialize. In a similar vein, it can be argued that the existing Centre-State fiscal relations were pseudo-egalitarian in character. How? The idea of devolution of powers remained more on paper than in practice. At this juncture, the Central government took the decision to adopt the policy of liberalization. Perhaps, the national government visualized that resurrection of the economy could be possible by doing away with the existing regulations. In other words, the government made the necessary efforts to integrate India with the world economy.

Fiscal Federalism and Economic Liberalization in India

The rationale for liberalization received impetus from the logic of globalization. The paper shall discuss the manner through which the globalizing phenomenon has influenced the dynamics of fiscal federalism. Before indulging into this task, it is imperative to discuss the theoretical parameters of globalization. It refers to a process of ever increasing interconnectedness among different parts of the globe. As a consequence, events occurring at one part of the world will have its impact on geographically discrete corners (Giddens 2009: 160). Global finance and communication technology can be regarded as its key pillars. Nevertheless, different schools of thought have perceived it from diverse standpoints. The Hyperglobalists (Ohmae 1990: 74) have argued that globalization has led to vanishing of the territorial borders. The national economies of the world have revealed greater tendencies to cooperate with one another. Hence, all of them constitute an inseparable part of the global economy. On the other hand, a completely opposite view can be advocated by the Sceptics (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 30). It repudiates the relevance of the market and

communication technology. On the contrary, it reinstates the relevance of national government in orchestrating the globalizing process. However, the globalization literature has also manifested thoughts that have attempted to reconcile these contrasting views. This viewpoint argues that national governments have become more flexible in character for meeting the exigencies of the globalizing process. Market forces and national governments acts in tandem (Held and McGrew 2003:15). Let us examine these arguments in the Indian context.

The under-performance of the state-sponsored capitalism may be a possible justification as to why the Indian government adopted the path of liberalization. As a consequence, the private forces were welcomed. Also, the government adopted the policy of de-regulation. As an adjunct to these measures, the loss bearing public sector units were being done away with (Varshney 1998: 309). In this context, it may not be incorrect to argue that the Indian state apparatus acted as a facilitator of the globalization process. The reduction of trade and tariff barriers stands can be cited to illustrate this point. However, the decision to privatize the economy was taken unilaterally by the Central Government. It cared little about the existing economic differences between the States. Nevertheless, there were some positive features of globalization. It has offered some scope for revisiting the dichotomy in the Centre-State relations. To get a better grasp of this changing dynamics, the idea of ‘autonomy’ and ‘authority’ needs to be viewed from a different terrain.

This point requires considerable exploration. In the post-reform scenario, the Indian Government has reduced its level of intervention into the economy. It has moved away from its earlier stance of controlling the commanding heights of the economy. It becomes evident with the revocation of the licensing provisions (Mukherji 2014: 9). Hence, the central government is longer autonomous in some sectors of the economy which it otherwise was. The economy has emphasized on inviting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country. Such an endeavour has opened up an opportunity for States to attract FDI without taking prior permission of the Central Government. Therefore, the Centre cannot control the action of the States. This point can be interpreted in two ways. First, the ‘authority’ of the Central government does not always extend to the States. Secondly, the States are having relatively greater ‘autonomy’ to take financial decisions. In this context, few questions become unavoidable. Are States becoming more powerful than the Centre in the post-liberalized context? Also, what are forces that are driving these transformations? In response to the first query, it can be argued that an alternative understanding of power is desirable. Let us explain the rationale for this statement. In the

context of fiscal federalism, it has been noted that economic powers are embedded within political power. How? Finance Commission (Art 280) is a statutory body. On the other hand, Planning Commission is an arm of Central government. The first section of the paper has dealt with it. It implies that economic domain is an extension of its political counterpart. This understanding has undergone a qualitative change in the globalized context. States are having greater economic liberty to manage their economy. However, they are still entitled to receive financial assistance from the Central government. The vertical control which the Centre used to exercise over States in the pre-liberalized context seems to have loosened up considerably.

It has brought about a new dimension to the politics of fiscal federalism. In the pre-reform era, the States used to compete with one another for getting development projects from the Centre. The prime objective of the States had been to develop cordial ties with the Centre. Such a line of action would definitely brighten the chances for enhancing its financial prosperity. Besides, they were not only keen to invite public sector projects but also provided subsidies to them. More importantly, the Centre remained the key arbitrator for resolving disputes between States (Sinha 2004: 28). This equation changed in the post-1991 phase. The market forces have given States the necessary impetus to compete among themselves. This process can be explained more vividly by evoking the idea of ‘region-states’ (Ohmae 1995: 81). This concept advocates that within the nation-states, certain areas are economically more prosperous than others. These areas may be advanced in terms of industry, technology and human capital. Hence, they are in a superior position to reap the benefits of the globalizing process. They can collaborate with other developed regions of the world for furthering the cause of their economic progress. Thus, a horizontal integration among various ‘region-states’ of the world can be witnessed. It bears the potential for ushering a win-win situation among them.

The idea of region-states resonate the phenomenon of ‘glocalization’ (Robertson 1994: 29). It has been used to exemplify the cultural dimensions of globalization. It refers that ‘local’ and the ‘global’ shall not be conceived as mutually antagonistic entities. On the contrary, it calls for a coexistence of both. This idea can also be applied in the context of fiscal federalism. It becomes imperative to elucidate this point. The States resemble the concept of the ‘local’. On the other hand, the global economy constitutes the ‘global’. In this case, ‘local’, has a territorial and jurisdictional connotation. The term ‘global’ does not require any further explanation. Its meaning becomes evident in terms of scope. The ‘region-states’ within a country have represented the globalizing phenomenon within their national boundary. In other words, they possess the

potential for transnational activities. It can be argued that ‘region states’ have become ‘global city’ (Sassen 1991: 4). Hence, the conventional distinction between the ‘local’, ‘national’ and the ‘global’ ought to be revisited. The ‘local’ constitute a part of the ‘national’ (Sassen 2007: 56). Also, the ‘global’ activities have been institutionalized in them. In this connection, we need to remember that the significance of the State’s is no less than their Central governments. Both of them are equally empowered to reap the benefits of globalization process. The role of diaspora in the development of States can be cited as a classic illustration. States can invite eminent NRI businessmen and individuals occupying key positions in leading international financial institutions (IFIs) regarding development purposes. They are the important cogs of Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC) (Sklair 2001: 124, 126). It comprises of the global businessmen, bureaucrats of international financial institutions and transnational media moguls. All of them operate in tandem for furthering the logic of global capitalism. Their presence has been felt across various region-states of the world, it has paved the way for Indian States to attain a global stature.

The increasing tendencies among the States to augment the number of Export Processing Zone (EPZ) and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) (Jenkins 2011: 50) can be argued to drive home this point. It calls for a collaborative action on the part of State governments and private investors. The governments ought to be instrumental in providing infrastructural and other crucial civic facilities (roads, railways, water supplies and electricity). It stress that the State governments shall lay the foundation for the smooth functioning of the private capital. Both of them will have to operate in an interdependent fashion. This logic reinstates itself in the context of SEZ than EPZ. Let us explain the rationale for this point. In SEZ, there are numerous social facilities alongside the core arena of economic activity (Jenkins 2011: 50, 51). The Second Generation of economic reforms in India have encouraged the propagation of Information Technology (IT). It may not be wrong to pose that SEZ came about as an adjunct to the IT revolution. This was one of the major projects during the BJP fist tenure in the Government in 1998. Thus, the Chief Minister’s of the Indian states having to play the role of entrepreneurs (Rudolph and Rudolph 2008: 252). Global era has exhibited the case of negotiations between provincial States and transnational business firms (Strange 1992: 10-11). They cannot help but to negotiate with personalities such as Ajimji Premji (Wipro) and S. Narayana Murthy (Infosys). Among the Indian States, Hyderabad has been able to effectively grasp the opportunities of the liberalized economy. Its Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu has been pivotal behind this initiative. It has become a major IT Hub (Rudolph and Rudolph 2008: 252). Besides, the state has become

the nerve centre for numerous FDI consultant firms (The Times of India, July 22, 2016). It aims to build a high-tech city, a software technology park and a financial district (Telengana Government, Official Website). It has explicitly revealed its inclination towards attracting private capital. The State has toed the neo-liberal logic of development. In this regard, its Chief Minister has applied for financial assistance from the World Bank development at the state level (Rudolph and Rudolph 2008: 268).

States are playing a pronounced role in influencing the economic decision making of the country despite not trying to assert their dominance over the Central government. On the contrary, they have contributed a great deal towards achieving the goal of ‘cooperative federalism’. The withering away of Centre’s veto power has accorded them considerable ‘autonomy’ (Sinha 2011: 59). As a consequence, States have become more relevant for the Centre in the post-liberalization phase. They have got an opportunity to proliferate the growth of transnational business for themselves as well as for the country. Their interest needs to be viewed as an integral part of larger national interest. It hinges on the capability of the States for tackling the exigencies of the globalized economy. Thus, they can approve the foreign investment projects, establish tax rates and appropriate other relevant norms (Sinha 2011: 61). On these grounds, the States operate at par with the Centre. Globalization has made the logic of devolution of responsibility between the Centre and States a natural phenomenon (Bagchi 2008: 44).

The positives of economic liberalization have to be acknowledged. Nevertheless, there are certain anomalies embedded within the process. Its ramification has been felt in the domain of economic development. This in turn, has affected the socio-economic condition both among and within the States. It is worthwhile to explore its dynamics. The liberalization process implies a cut-back on the welfare activities on the part of national government. Interestingly enough, the Centre has staunchly projected a picture of inclusivity by assuring to protect the needs of the rural poor. Also, they have urged to give sufficient attention to the social sectors such as health and education. Unfortunately, the ground reality is yet to resemble a promising picture.

It cannot be denied that economic liberalization has negatively affected the agrarian sector of the economy. The farmers have been arbitrarily subjected to competition from the international market. The reduction of government subsidies to the farming community can be regarded as an important factor (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2000: 144). More importantly, under the federal arrangement, agricultural sector belongs to the State List. Hence, the burden has fallen on those States where neither the primary sector is equipped enough

to generate sufficient revenue nor do they possess a vibrant service sector. Moreover, the national government's role in implementing the smooth functioning of the Public Distribution System in the rural areas has left a lot to be desired (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2000: 160). The benefits of economic liberalization have not completely percolated to the lower stratum of the Indian society. This is true even in the case of those States which have succeeded in inviting FDI. They have found it difficult to mitigate the rural-urban rift in terms to economic development. The proponents of liberalization may counter this point by arguing that private forces have thrown up greater economic opportunities for the people (Bhagwati and Pangariya 2012: 39, 40). In response to this argument, it can be claimed that the post-liberalized era has also witnessed a steady increase in the number of contractual workers.

The post-liberalized phase has also witnessed the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) into the Indian polity. It will be interesting to explore the manner through which it affects the nature of fiscal federalism. Thus, it becomes imperative to get a proper grasp of its operational dynamics. First, it proposes for a single uniform tax regime across states but with few exemptions. It implies that a categorical distinction has been made in terms of 'goods of basic necessity' and 'luxury items'. In case of the former, there would a lower rate. For goods pertaining to the latter category, a standard rate would be charged. Moreover, for services, a single rate would prevail (Rao and Chakraborty 2010: 50). Secondly, there ought to be GST for the Centre (CGST) and States (SGST) respectively. Thirdly, in the context of GST, the veto power will remain with the Central government. Finally, the earnings from the real estate sector would be brought under the purview of GST (Rao 2010: 73).

A critical exploration of these clauses can help us to delineate certain grey areas related to the scheme. Also, the ramifications on fiscal federalism can be carved out. By virtue of wielding the veto power, the Centre has greater bargaining power vis-a-vis States. In other words, it is mandatory for the States to follow the norms of the Centre. Such a clause appears to be discriminatory in character. Besides, the scheme has also failed to consider for the differential capacities across states. How? Those States which do not have an efficient service sector shall stand at a disadvantageous position (Rao 2011: 45, 46). It is hard to deny that the logic behind the introduction of GST emphasizes a substantial curtailment of the fiscal autonomy of the States. Such autonomy could have given the respective States a better opportunity to focus on their public services in an efficient manner. It would have enabled them to address the needs of the masses more effectively. It can be argued that the GST involves certain conditionalities on the States. Behind the benign motives that the scheme

seeks to propagate, certain centralizing trends could barely be ruled out. The incorporation of the Real Estate sector within the ambit of GST can be cited as an illustration. The States have a power to levy taxes over matters pertaining to Real Estates in the form of Stamp Duty. This would have certainly brightened the possibility of revenue generation for States. However, due to the centralizing tendencies of the GST, the revenue earned from Real estate would go the Centre's basket (Rao 2010: 73). These analyses have propelled us to argue the existing binaries of economic liberalization. It has given liberty to States for attracting FDI at the same time aggravating the rural-urban rift in them. The Central Government have also failed to tackle certain ill-effects of the economic liberalization process. The indicators of economic development in the country substantiate this point.

Concluding Observations

The paper has traversed the shifts that have taken place in the post-liberalization Centre-State financial relations. In this endeavour, it has traced the evolution of their fiscal-relationship and the existing disjuncture between them. The Central government's ability in controlling the financial arm of the States reveals the logic of power as 'decision making' and 'agenda setting'. Despite the Constitution empowering States with a specific set of financial powers, the relevance of the Planning Commission and Finance Commission can hardly be overlooked. Hence, a considerable of asymmetry can be noted in Centre-State financial relationship. The onset of globalization has provided a scope to explore fiscal federalism from a alternative plane. States are in a position to attract FDI without taking prior approval of the Centre. They have substantial degree of 'authority' and 'autonomy'. States are playing key role in India's integration with the global economy. The paper has dealt with the case of Hyderabad to drive home this point. Nevertheless, the GST scheme has again propelled us to contradict the present line of argument. Its clauses are trying to reassert the dominance of the Centre over States thereby repudiating the spirit of 'cooperative federalism'. The paper argues that fiscal federalism in post-liberalized scenario reveals the logic of 'double movement'. The States are liberated in certain spheres yet constrained in others by the Central government. The Centre should be mindful of tackling the possible challenges of economic liberalization in a manner that do not deteriorate the economic development of States at the former's expense.

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Powershifts in A Neo-Liberal Era: Case Study of Tea Plantations in Darjeeling Hills

Sovna Khati*

Tea plantation industries are one of the most important industries in Darjeeling Hill region of West Bengal State. These labour intensive colonial establishments sustain almost the entire population of the hills economically, directly or indirectly. Therefore, its contribution to the economy of the region and that of the state is tremendous. Tea plantation industry, a rigid, patriarchal, segregationist structure, has with the onset of globalisation and liberalisation of the economy undergone some changes. These developments reasserted the colonially designed nature of relationship between the plantation management and the labourers and that of the plantation life itself. In this light this paper attempts to explore the impacts of the neo-liberal policies on the plantation structure of Darjeeling Hills.

Keywords: Tea Plantation, Labourers, Moral Economy, Geographical Indicator, Fair Trade.

Tea plantation industries are one of the most important industries in Darjeeling Hill region of the Indian state of West Bengal. These labour intensive colonial establishments sustain almost the entire population of the hills economically, directly or indirectly. Therefore, its contribution to the economy of the region and that of the state is tremendous. Tea plantation industry, a rigid, patriarchal, segregationist structure, has with the onset of globalisation and liberalisation of the economy has gone through certain changes. These developments have reasserted the colonially designed unjust nature of relationship between the plantation management and the labourers and that of the plantation life itself. In this light this paper attempts to explore the impacts of the neo-liberal policies on the plantation structure of Darjeeling hills.

The history of tea plantations in India tells us the history of imperial conquests and expansion. It provides layered cultural histories of colonial and post-colonial world. Tea, a much desired product, travelled from its homeland China to different parts of the world and was grown on a large scale on the soils of colonial India. With the report of an imperial botanist, Joseph Banks, the viability of tea cultivation in India was established (Griffiths 1967: 33-34). Tea plantations were established on vast jungles of Assam and gradually spread to rest of India. In Darjeeling Hills, with the endeavour of the first superintendent, Dr. Campbell, tea cultivation started in 1841 and by 1856 tea

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta

plantations were established on an extensive scale (O' Malley 1970: 73). These tea plantations, colonial enterprise, represent a rigid, hierarchical, patriarchal and a segregationist structure. Tea plantation industry in independent India still continues to be of great importance, economically.

A plantation connotes a space of exploitation and marginalization and subjugation, of the labourers. The economic relations of the plantation have created characteristics specific to the tea plantations. The establishment of tea plantations was an arduous task. The sites suited for tea plantations were covered with vast dense jungles. It required large number of manual labour force. In Darjeeling Hills the indigenous population of the then Darjeeling region were the Lepchas. The Lepcha population moved around the Eastern Himalayan region, practicing Jhumming cultivation. They were not therefore an ideal labour force to work in the plantation enclaves. The immigrants of Nepal provided the much needed labour in the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills. The repressive Nepalese regime based on rigid caste hierarchy made the lives of the untouchables and tribal's miserable. This forced the Nepalese to migrate into the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills (Sinha and Subba 2007: 14-17).

The labourers were initially recruited by indentured system. The labourers signed a contract before entering the work in the plantations for specific years and the labourers would be bonded to the particular plantation and could not leave the plantation before the period of the contract expires. In Darjeeling, Sardari system of recruitment was followed according to which a sardar was given the task to collect the labourers. The sardars mostly collected labourers from their own community. The labourers were brought to the plantation through means of deceit, allurement and even physical violence. The sardars was paid money per person he would bring in the plantations. He was responsible for the behaviour of the labourers. According to the Workers Breach of Contract Act, the labourers were liable to physical punishment if they went against the plantation norms, which were solely decided by the English planters. Their mobility was completely restricted inside the plantation. Thus plantation was an enclave, completely in isolation from the outside world.

The settlement strategy of the colonial masters resulted in the establishment of plantation enclaves, completely cut-off from the surrounding people and economy. They were snapped off their social and cultural ties and the migrant labourers were alien to the plantation life. The labourers were housed inside the plantation area and incorporated into new forms of society dictated by the planters to suit the interest of the plantation work. The colonial planter was all in all. He had the supreme control over the plantation industry as well as the society. The plantation labourers were bonded to the plantation life.

Tea plantation industry, an agro-industrial unit, has a unique capitalist mode of production in combination with feudal relations of production. A masculine structure, tea plantation industry is governed by paternalistic relationship between the planter and the labourers in colonial India and that of the management and the labourers in independent India. In the British Planter's Raj, the manager was a male figure and was considered as "mai-baap" (Chatterjee 2001: 6). Signifying the planter as fatherly figure and considering the entire labour relation within a family, the term of consent and coercion and the legitimization of planter's power, patronage and disciplining of the workers was made possible. The ethnic difference and social separation of the planter from the staff and the labourers through the cultural practice in a daily habitus reflects the planter's superior self-hood and his power.

The bondage of the land is deepened with the family system of recruitment of the migrant plantation labourers. The planters therefore provided non-monetary incentives like houses, ration, medical benefits, and schooling facilities etc. inside the plantation, strengthening the bondage of the labourers. This very nature of plantation life determined the nature of economy which is a moral economy in tea plantations, which has led to the generational sustenance of the tea plantations in independent India. This moral economic bond ties the management and labourers in an economic reciprocity on unequal terms. In acceptance of this unjust economic relation, the strong bond of the labourers with the plantation land is crucial..

Another important relation dynamics that emerges out of the moral economy of plantation life is the relationship of the plantation labourers, especially tea pluckers who are mostly women to that of the tea plant. Besky explains the relationship as that of a "mother-child" relation (Besky 2014: 61-63). The tea pluckers forge this intimate bond with the tea plant which adds to the bondage of the labourers to that of the plantation field and thus the plantation life. This complex relationship among the land, labour and the plant determines the tea plantation economy. This agro-industrial economy has internalised their bond which has helped the tea plantations survive through phase of decline and its continued existence in the global era. It essentially ties down the labourers to the tea plantations and thus has provided social stability to the plantation labourers and therefore to the plantations itself.

The colonially designed relationship between the management and the labourers still holds true in tea plantations of independent India. Tea plantation industry has largely remained a means of capitalist extraction. Right from the beginning, tea plantations in Darjeeling Hills has been producing essentially

for international consumption. Even though in independent India, the state government is the actual owner of the tea plantations, it has remained in the hands of private players. This is made possible due to the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953, according to which the government leases the plantation for thirty years and collects revenue and land tax every year. Besides the individual or the company or proprietor who owns the land are the official bearers of it and can sell the land to any buyer during their ownership period (Tirkey 2005: 85). The enactment of Plantation Labour Act (PLA) 1951, by the Indian state has laid down the provisions for the management in independent tea plantations to provide the non-monetary facilities to the labourers (Sharma 2000: 54). This practice of providing facilities was adopted by the colonial planters as a strategy to bond the labourers to the tea plantations. Hence the independent Indian state following the colonial dictums have made the continued existence of the tea plantations' life successful.

Gendered Labour and Tea Plantations

The story of tea is incomplete without referring to the women work force in its production process. There is a gendered division of labourers' from the very inception of tea production. Right from China to colonial India and now in independent India, tea plucking work has remained essentially feminized.

The structure of patriarchy supports the venture of capitalist accumulation of the plantation companies. Tea plantation industry is essentially a patriarchal structure. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby 1989: 214). In the tea plantation industry the structure of patriarchal mode of production and patriarchal relations in paid work contributes to the marginalization and subjugation of the women labourers. In tea plantations the structure of gender intersects with that of class, ethnicity and family which creates gendered division of labour. The social relations produced in the plantation enclaves provide a hierachal ordering and control, where the male planters and supervisors command the obedience and domination of women labourers throughout historical development of tea plantation industries.

In China, women mostly served as tea pluckers because they were deemed fit for the task by the society. The bodily purity and disciplining of the women pluckers was regarded very important because the body of the women pluckers was believed to have effect upon the quality of tea leaves. In ancient China it was believed that the women pluckers were abstained from eating certain kind of meat and fish, so that their breath would not badly affect the tea leaves. The young virgin girls were preferred tea pluckers and their hands were

carefully scrutinized (Chatterjee 2001:29). Thus the control and disciplining of the women labour force lies at the heart of the tea production system.

The feminization of tea is further enhanced in the colonial, post-colonial and global world. Tea plantations are a social system, where its mode of production gives rise to specific social relations. These economic and social relations help create and strengthen a patriarchal and hierarchical plantation structure. Therefore, the economic and social dynamics which are intricately linked inside the tea plantations give rise to the gendered division of labour.

In tea plantations family has remained an important site in the production as well as reproduction of labour. It has been pivotal in the capitalistic accumulation of wealth in colonial tea plantations. In the early colonial days, the tea planters' encouraged family system of recruitment as the women would help stabilize the labour force in the tea plantations. The Transport of Native Act of 1863 aimed at maintaining balance between men and women. The emigration superintendent refused of a batch contained less than one female to every four male (Chatterjee 2001: 80). They instigated community life in the tea plantations. Women were also important for reproducing the labour and have continued to remain a dominant labour force in the plantations, especially as tea pluckers.

The position of the women in family has been detrimental in occupying the positions in the plantation work-hierarchy. The patriarchal notion of male as the breadwinner of the family and the head of the household have contributed to regard the women work as supplementary work. This notion has helped cheapening of the value of the female labourers. This has been historically evident as the women labourers were paid less than the male labourers until the passing of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1975 (Bhardra 1992: 76).

Labour market is considered to be a space where individuals freely exchange their labour power for money however the household work burden are carried out by mostly females. The double burden of work at home and plantation industry restricts their time availability in the work place. This lowers down their bargaining power over their wage condition and certainly leads to poorer wages. Besides in tea plantations, plantation industry being the only employment opportunity also adds to the poor economic and social conditions of the women labourers. This has also helped the plantation management to get female seasonal workers during peak plucking times. The patriarchal construct of society, of women being naturally fitted to pluck the tea leaves enables the occupational segmentation of the female workers in the margins of plantation hierarchy.

Women workers in almost all the tea plantations, including Darjeeling Hills were immigrants. The hierarchical division of labour in tea plantations is reinforced by the patriarchal power. The legitimization of dominance of the male supervisors over the immigrant female labourers was made possible by the mai-baap relationship between the male planters and the labourers. The planter assumed the role of a father in the tea plantations, legitimizing his authority over the plantation daughters. This enabled the unjust exploitative practices carried out by the managers towards the female labourers. The poor economic and social conditions of the labourers are justified on the mai-baap relationship. However this gendered relationship also intersects with colonialism, class and ethnicity.

In the global period the feminization of tea is more strengthened. The moral economy of plantation has fostered a mother-child relationship between the women labourers and the tea plant. This reflects a relationship of care and nurture between the women labourers and the tea plant thus naturalizing the plantation work of the women labourers. The relationship of the plantation work and its female labourers has also been fetishized. This fetishization is visible by the display of image of women in the marketed tea boxes. The logo of Darjeeling tea is an image of a female labourer holding the tea leaves. Thus tea plantation has created, maintained and strengthened the gendered labour practices and feminization of tea plantation work.

Tea plantation has a unique cultural history- an enclave economy of which the devalued women labour and their disciplining constitutes its material base. Tea was and still is thus produced through the culture of patronage and creates a moral economy.

Tea plantation industry from 1970s onwards faced a period of decline, with the introduction of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) until the liberalisation of the Indian economy (Sarkar 2008: 647). With the growth of internationalisation of trade and finance in India from 1990s onwards, the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills underwent some important developments which are crucial to the stability and existence of tea plantations in the global era. There have been two much noticed developments in the Darjeeling Hills tea plantations: i) Darjeeling tea as Geographical Indicator (GI) and ii) the Fair Trade tea plantations. These developments have undoubtedly helped the tea plantations of the hills to survive in the neo-liberal era but they have at the same time restructured the meaning of the very colonially constructed meaning of the plantation life and the relationship between the management and the tea labourers and also the state.

Ethical Trade in Darjeeling Tea Plantations: Fair-Trade and Geographical Indicator

The liberalized market economy has developed a new approach towards trade relations, known as Ethical trade. The Ethical trade, as the name suggests, provides an ethical dimension to the global trading. The word Ethical trade has been used recently in 1995 by Welford, however the initiative towards Ethical trade dates back to 1940s. Ethical trade is used to refer to the sourcing of products from companies guaranteeing core labour and human rights standards to the workforce (Carrier 2007: 1). The process of globalization and economic liberalization, have enabled the products produced in Global South, easily available to the consumers of the Global North. Globalization has also made the people aware of the persistent economic disparity between the North and the South.

Ethical trade in the context of competitive capitalist market and profit maximization emerges as an alternative path of trade. Ethical trade stands for production of the production in their original socio-economic context, with an impetus on the idea of sustainable development. So Ethical trade is a trade in which goods and services are produced under condition that are socially, environmentally and financially responsible to the global market community.

The phenomenon of Ethical trade has succeeded affecting the Indian economy through the tea plantation industries of Darjeeling Hills. The global development of fair trade has slipped into the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills along with the concept of Geographical indicator. These two concepts of Fair-Trade and Geographical Indicator are essential components of growing Ethical trade.

Fair-Trade in Darjeeling Tea Plantations

Fair-trade refers to the trade which aims at fetching fair price to the producers of mostly the third world countries, for their products by removing intermediaries and directly connecting them to the global market. It aims at helping the disadvantaged producers to have a just return for their work and help continuity of their income and decent working conditions through sustainable development (Blowfield 1999: 754).

With the unregulated market policy under neo-liberalism, the small scale framers have to face stiff competition with the large technologically advanced agriculture companies. Neo-liberalism strengthened the need for “fair-trade”, for providing social justice to the small scale producers, especially producers of the Global South. The concept of fair trade gained currency after the Second World War. The UN members used the fair trade concept for just trade between

the developed countries and developing countries. The fair trade goods was promoted and marketed by three European Alternative Trade Organizations (ATOs)—Trains Fair, Max Havetan and Fairtrade Mark in the late 1980s. The fair trade labelling then spread to seventeen other nations of Europe, North America and Japan. In 1997, these organizations coordinated to create an umbrella group called the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations (FLO). FLO is based on Bonn, Germany. This organization provided certification standards for fair trade products and created a uniformed retail market through labelling and promotion (Moberg and Lyon 2010: 5). It ensured the highest possible returns to the producers. It is based on ethical economy.

Fair trade came in Darjeeling tea plantations during 1990s (Besky 2010: 104). The tea planters couldn't deny it as it connected them directly to the international markets like US. The fair trade products fetched higher prices and the social premium could be used by the planter for meeting the welfare provisions. It was more flexible than the state laws. Thus it is constant with the neo-liberal principles as it privileges the international agencies to be more effective in distributing the capital in equitable ways. FLO provides the concept of "hired labour situation" for plantation. According to this situation, the labourers can and are supposed to democratically elect a body called the Joint Body. A joint body must i) inform and consult all the workers of the company about fair trade standards and the fair trade premium and its use, and ii) manage and invest the fair trade premium transparently and responsibly. FLO states that within one year from the certification the plantation labourers must have fair knowledge about the aims and objectives of fair trade. It is the management who should educate the labourers about the fair trade (Ibid: 105-109). The principle of one person one vote must be followed and there is quota for the minimum number of women representatives in the joint body. The joint body would decide upon the ways of spending the fair trade premium (ibid).

Darjeeling fair trade tea plantations have joint bodies. But as seen by Sarah Besky, in Makaibari Tea Estate, one of fair trade tea plantations in Darjeeling Hills, the labourers lacked the knowledge about the fair trade and joint body. They perceived the joint body to be controlled by the owners rather than their representative body. It was seen that in Makaibari, the owner of tea plantation was the head of the joint body and its members were not democratically elected but was nominated by the owner itself (Besky 2010: 109). In reality, rather than fostering transparency fair trade policy have undermined the ability of the workers ability to access about their labour rights.

In January 2008, FLO set the fair trade minimum price for tea and premium for dust, leaf and CTC (cut- thresh-curl) grade of tea but the Darjeeling tea

plantations are exempted from the minimum pricing. Thus the labourers either in fair trade plantation or in the conventional plantation gets the same amount of wages, as negotiated in the tripartite meeting at the state level. The profit fetched by the fair tea does not benefit the labourers. Rather all the profits go into the hands of the owners (Gothoskar 2012: 33). Thus the direct buying relationship does not fetch any benefit to the plantation labourers in Darjeeling Hills. According to FLO, until there is minimum price fixed for Darjeeling tea, there will be an exception made in the case of Darjeeling tea plantation regarding the basic needs of the labourers like housing, medical facilities and others. The exception is that the non-monetary incentives to be provided by the management under PLA can be partly financed through the fair trade premium (Besky 2010: 110-112). This put the owners at an advantaged position, as these expenses are actually to be made out from the profit of the company. But since the premium can be used to maintain the welfare provisions, the owners will gain more profit from all these developments. While on the other hand the Indian state provides extensive security regarding wages, provident fund, gratuity and bonus. Fair trade thus seems to both challenge neo-liberalism and at the same times create new modes of regulation that reinforces neo-liberalism itself.

Fair trade has moved from its roots, which are providing an alternative to the large scale production and protection of the small scale producers. The fair trade model does not stand fit for the large scale production structure like plantation. (Moore 2010: 10-11). Fair trade is based on the ideology of empowering the small scale producers directly linking them to the market and enhancing their entrepreneurship capability with environment sustainability. The fair trade fits well in empowering the coffee producers as coffee is produced in small scale by the small farmers. But the situation of tea plantations in Darjeeling Hills is different. The labourers are mere wage workers and have no property rights so much so that the land where they are residing for many generations do not belong to them.

Fair trade calls for collaboration at all the levels of production. But in the tea plantations, there are mostly absent owners, who live in distant land. The labourers are mostly unaware of their own owner, not to mention the dialogue between the labourers and the owners. Even the labourers hardly interact with the managers residing in the plantation. Fair trade aims at creating awareness among the labourers about their rights but the labourers hardly have any idea as to what happens to the tea leaves they plucked, after they are weighed. There is hardly any upward mobility of the labourers. The structured power relation of the tea plantation is such that the labourers do not gain

personal autonomy and have no say in the direct supply chain, while fair trade aims at personal autonomy of all the actors in the production process. It just improves the position of the plantation owners in the supply chain. Fair trade is therefore incapable of removing the historically present power imbalances inherent in the tea plantation structure while further making the labourers conditions vulnerable. Therefore, the hierarchical power relations of the tea plantation dating back to the colonial era do not provide the labourers the opportunity to shape and define their space.

The fair trade policy has considerably reduced the role of the state and that of the trade unions in providing social justice to the labourers. It destabilizes the role of the state and that of trade unions and creates the new modes of regulations which ultimately serve the plantation management and the workers conditions remain vulnerable as before. The Indian labour legislations have many provisions that help maintaining a decent socio-economic standard of the labourers like the food security, although inadequate (Besky 2010: 117). There have been dissolutions of trade unions in many fair trade tea plantations like. However it is the state and trade unions that protect the state laws, local laws and develop projects on account of regional variability which fair trade doesn't. Fair-trade tend to universalize the regional varieties and its universalistic principle resonates to a single global free market.

Darjeeling Tea as a Geographical Indicator (GI)

Geographical Indication (GI) is an international legal label which aims to protect a product from falsification, linking it to the place of its origin and traditional form of production. This way it enables the concept of ethical trade. It was in 1905, when the first system of GI for food products was the French “appellation d’ origine contrôlée” (AOC), was codified. By the middle of 20th century the Lisbon Agreement created a common “appellation of origin” protection for products originating in signatory countries, mostly from Europe. It was in 1994 that the World Trade Organization’s ‘Trade Related Aspects of International Property Rights’ (TRIPS) reaffirmed and extended the rights of national government of the member states to grant GIs. It legally protects many of products and GI beverages include Champagne, Scotch, Tequila, Cognac, Bordeaux and Kone coffee. Under the Geographical Indication Act of 1999, Darjeeling tea was the first product to be registered as a GI (Besky 2013).

The government of India endows the Tea Board of India with the ownership over the words “Darjeeling” and “Darjeeling Tea” as well as the logo of the Darjeeling tea. The tea board of India describes the status of Darjeeling tea as a GI as follows:

Darjeeling tea is India's treasured geographical indication and forms a very important part of India's cultural and collective intellectual heritage. It is of considerable importance to the economy of India because of international reputation and consumer recognition enjoyed by it (*ibid*).

The GI as a concept links the product with the place i.e. with geo-climatic conditions, along with the distinct production techniques. GI tag therefore represents value, histories and characteristics of the food product. The Tea Board of India and Darjeeling Tea Association (DTA) associates tea with a luxury product cultivated in unique landscape of Darjeeling with skilled labourers creating the luxury item (*ibid*). The tea board emphasizes the production as some sort of craft production. It shadows the exploitative relation between the management and the labour force and the arduous work that goes into making of the product. Rather the exploitative tea production, which started in colonial Indian tea plantations, has been endorsed as a national heritage. The tea board forges and internalizes a natural connection between the labourers and the tea plants. Thus the Tea Board produced a very ideal picture of Darjeeling tea plantation and its production process.

GI reshaped the perception of the global consumers defining the Darjeeling tea with unique biophysical conditions, craft production, luxury item and as a heritage and the natural connection between the labourers and tea plants wherein tea leaves are plucked artfully by the magical nimble fingers of the local women. Thus the concept of authenticity and naturalness was developed around Darjeeling tea. It overshadows the difficult and hardship faced by the tea plantation labourers. It does not take into its account the unjust and exploitative power relations that are present in the tea plantations. The consumers of the Global North are fascinated by the idea of the craft production and rarity of the product. Darjeeling tea is thus considered being of high quality and as a luxury purchase.

The tea board of India has not just reinvented the product but also the tea industrial production process. It naturalized the relation between the labourers and the tea bushes, while the tea plants were brought from China and the labourers are mostly migrants from Nepal. GI has been considered as a movement for uplifting the economically and socially disadvantaged farmers with conservation of sustainable environment and traditional practices. But it has limitations as the rural development strategy. GI does focus on the unjust labour conditions rather it elides it.

GI recasts the tea plantation as "tea gardens" rather than plantation, attaching romantic visions of the working environment. The tea plantation which

is both the of work and that of labourers residence is defined by the Nepali term “Kaman”, used by the local labourers to identify the tea plantation. Kaman is of disputable word of English origin. It is derived from the English word “command” or perhaps “come on! Come on! Used by the colonial planters addressing the labourers to continue working (Besky 2014: 56–57). This diagnosis of the word Kaman reveals the oppressive and coercive nature of the work culture still present in the tea plantation, though implicit. Thus it denotes both the physical terrain and the mode of production.

The feminization of the tea is ever present as the position of the women as tea pluckers have been naturalized. The logo of the Darjeeling tea comprises of a picture of a women holding two leaves and a bud. The marking images of Darjeeling consists of women pluckers with a graceful smile wearing the traditional Nepali dress (Besky 2013). But the real picture is very different where they are burdened by heavy load of tea leaves which they carry on their hunched back. Tourism has helped the tourist to realize the Darjeeling plantation imaginary materially. The plantations bungalows have been transformed into tourists’ lodges and the tourist can relive the history of heritage tea plantations. The tea plantations are thus transformed from the sites of colonial oppression into a proud national heritage.

Fair-Trade and Geographical Indicator: An alternative Path to Neo-Liberalism

The alternative trading models: FT and GI, fosters the idea of Ethical labour, which enables them to mask the crude economic interest of the global companies. Both FT and GI has been successfully flourishing in the third world companies because of the consumer’s support. The consumer purchases the product at relatively higher prices than the conventional productions because of the ethical values attached to the product. The ethical production is backed up by the notion of ethical consumption.

Ethical consumption is where the products have been produced in the authentic social or regional environments. The consumers chooses ethically traded product upon the conventionally traded product as they believe that such a trade is economically fair to the marginalised producers. They purchase the Fair-trade products with the belief that such ethical consumption will mitigate the economy based on fetishised commodities, stripped of their contexts of production.

Both FT and GI feeds the ethical satisfaction of the global consumers. They hide the economic agenda of the market and provide a human face to these neo-liberal policies. The very mechanisms of these policies help unravel the

economic logic of these policies. An important element of both FT and GI is the criteria of certification. The international certifying agencies like FLO provide the standards for the products to be certified as FT product and GI product. These certifications protect the products from counterfeit globally, by linking the product with the place of production and particular way of production. However, for the certification of these products as an FT or a GI product, the company needs to pay the certifying agencies. By 1999, the global organic market was estimated to be worth one billion dollars, with organic imports from developing countries worth five hundred million dollars. According to US Fair Trade Federation, the fair-trade market accounts for hundred million in retail sales each year in Europe and US (Blowfield 1999:754).

Fair-trade and GI tend to in fact fetishise the product by connecting the product to the idyllic landscape of the plantations in the hills, hence making it more palatable to the international consumers. The motive of fetching just returns of the product to the producers has not improved the economic and social conditions of the tea plantation labourers. The wages of the labourers still remains very low. To Gothoskar all the benefits don't trickle down to the labourers but remain in the hands of the management. These policies have in fact justified the colonially structured unjust exploitative relationship between the management and the labourers and made them as a heritage. Thus the FT and GI seems to set as an alternative to the neo-liberal policies but they rather support and strengthen the market economy.

Thus the study of tea plantations in Darjeeling Hills, which stands as a symbol of colonial conquest in India, exposes some transitions in the nature of tea plantation economy, the relationship between the management and the labourers and that of the nature of the plantation life. The nature of the moral economy of the tea plantation, a colonial legacy, has undergone some changes in the global phase. With the change in the moral economy, the very rationale behind the exploitative relationship between the management and the labourers, the labourers sense of their depravity seems to gain consciousness. The mai-baap relationship that was forged by its economy seems to have changed with the neo-liberal policies. These policies have on some levels made the tea plantation industry be looked in its true light—that of global capitalist extraction. The plantation management now seems as a crude business venture governed purely on monetary terms, unlike that in colonial times. The ethnic divide between the management and labourers, enmeshes class with ethnicity which still persists. Tea plantation is the heart of Darjeeling Hills and one cannot fully comprehend the socio-economic, political and also cultural conditions of the hills without looking into the tea plantations.

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Embedded Power and the Politics of Region-Mapping in South Asia

Anindya Batabyal*

Although the very idea of South Asia in its present form emerged after the Second World War, it has a critical historical legacy dating back to the colonial era and only by understanding that historical background can anyone comprehend the political, historical and sentimental baggage that this representation carries from that past. This article will emphasize that the idea of South Asia is neither a product of shared world view nor any objective geographic realities but has emerged as a result of diverse global, regional and local political processes that in turn reflects different configurations of power relations and histories at different points of time. While identifying the various points of contestations of determining a region on the basis of geography, geopolitics, economics and culture, it is also important to evaluate the politics behind 'region-mapping' as far as the present framing of South Asia is concerned. Transcending the idea that regions are social and imaginary constructs, this article will analyze the manner in which the process of 'knowledge as power' played a significant part in the colonial framing of India that continued in the post-colonial era with the framing of South Asia and on all instances, the process of framing was influenced by the objective of serving the interests of the framers of the region.

Key Words: Colonial, Post-colonial, Region-mapping, SAARC, South Asia, Sub-continent.

South Asia was conspicuous by its absence during the pre-colonial and the British colonial period in the sense that the regional label is understood in common parlance today. There is no uniform criterion of defining the territorial space that came to be regarded as South Asia, particularly after the end of the Second World War. In most conversations not constrained by strict diplomatic protocol, South Asia continues to be used as a synonym for what was earlier known as British India (Joshi 2003: 6). For the British colonial rulers, their empire in India used to define the entire region. Later, in the twentieth century, the emergence of the United States (US), first as the major Anglo-phone power and later as a unique global superpower after the Second World War has ensured that the labels they originally deployed have come to be used almost universally throughout the globe. South Asia as the description of a particular region is a product of that historical process although the very categorization of the region

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta.

as South Asia came to be used widely only after the end of British colonialism from the region. The very definition of a region on many occasions defied logic along with geographical contours and is often constructs of geopolitical convenience of great powers. And on several occasions, it has been seen that the people who belong to a particular region did not have a say in the process of demarcation and categorization of the area of their own nativity.

In this context, it is important to note that in December 1985, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), without defining South Asia has assumed that it comprises seven sovereign states, which are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives (Dhaka Declaration 1985). With the inclusion of Afghanistan as member in 2007 at the Fourteenth SAARC Summit, the number of SAARC members has risen to eight (Fourteenth Summit Declaration 2007). But if South Asia is simply an expression of geographical proximity, then the question that obviously emerges is why Myanmar (earlier Burma)¹ in spite of being a part of British India till 1937, is not a part of the entity called South Asia while Maldives has become a part of it. Along similar lines, it is significant that some descriptions tend to include Afghanistan as part of South Asia while others; particularly those within the SAARC were extremely reluctant to admit the country as a member till 2005. Moreover, it is worth exploring the extent to which Pakistan also belong to South Asia given the country's historic and ancestral links with the Islamic world in West and Central Asia as part of a larger Muslim or Islamic civilization and identity. Further, it is also interesting that Sri Lanka, a founding member of the SAARC, had initially expressed its inclination to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) when it was being established on 08 August, 1967. Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) had several commonalties in cultural, mercantile and political terms with large parts of Southeast Asia going back to a millennium. Sri Lanka even shares Theravada Buddhism with Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos. However, as the issue of Sri Lanka's membership of ASEAN was not viewed favourably by the then ruling elites of the Southeast Asian states who took the lead in forming ASEAN in 1967, Sri Lanka ended up, perhaps uncomfortably, in the so called South Asian region (Anderson 1998: 6). Therefore, what constitutes South Asia and who is a part of that territorial entity has remained as a matter of intense debate and contestation.

¹ The ruling Military Junta changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar in 1989, a year after thousands were killed in pro-democracy uprisings against military rule inside Burma. This change in name was recognized by the UN, countries like France and Japan, but not by Great Britain and US. In this article, the name Myanmar has been used to indicate the country, which prior to 1989 was known as Burma.

This article will argue that contrary to popular perception, far from being an objective exercise, the construction of a region or ‘region-mapping’ such as South Asia involves a normative political exercise designed to serve the interests of the framers of the region. This exercise of constructing a region like South Asia is the imposition of a particular kind of ‘knowledge as power’ in which various people and complex ways of life are reduced to essentialist categories and meanings so that they can be easily managed and controlled by major regional and global actors. Therefore, regions like nation-states are both ‘imagined’ and contested notions and can be created through the implicit decision by the political elites to imagine them into existence. The article will highlight the different points of contestation of the territorial space demarcated as South Asia, which has often been ignored in the dominant representation of the South Asian region. While evaluating the politics and latent power play behind the current framing of South Asia as a region, it will analyze the existence of diverse constructions or framings of the territorial space called South Asia that in many ways contests and contradict the dominant representation as far as framing of the region is concerned.

Constructing South Asia as a Regional Entity

The notion of South Asia emerged in place of the earlier and often used terminology ‘Indian Subcontinent’ soon after the Second World War when the US state department started using the term in order to sub-divide the world into different regions so that its officials could get a quick and uncomplicated grasp of global geography. This process of constructing regions in many parts of the world compelled the people who were being so classified, to ‘belong’ to a particular region (Zaidi 2009: 36-37). However, during the early period of the decade of 1950, this notion became less popular and was replaced by the formulation ‘Southern Asia’ within academic and policy discourse. The formulation ‘Southern Asia’ stretching from the Persian Gulf to Southeast Asia including China differed considerably in terms of its demarcation of what constitutes present day South Asia (Brecher 1973: 373-374). This use of the term ‘Southern Asia’ within US academic and policy circles as a regional indicator continued till the decade of 1960 and was ceased to be used completely during the decade of 1970. The formulation South Asia started to re-emerge in the decade of the 1960 when it began to be increasingly used in US academic and official discourse. The term South Asia gained some form of recognition during this period with several universities in US, Great Britain and even Canada starting to offer area studies programmes and undertake research under the title South Asia. But there were marked differences in the territorial boundaries of what was regarded as South Asia from the present day formulation of the South

Asian region. Previous conceptions regarding South Asia used to incorporate both Afghanistan as well as Myanmar while Maldives was considered to be marginal to the idea of South Asia in the earlier period and thus not being part of the region. It was only in 1985 with the establishment of the SAARC that its seven member states came to represent and encompass the region as it is framed today.

The social constructivist perspective has made important contributions to the study of regions by going beyond the material dimensions and taking into account the ideational forces that play an important part in the social construction of regions. Taking cue from Benedict Anderson's study of nationalism and nation-states, it can be argued that there exists many parallels between imagining a nation and imagining a region and regions like nation-states can be imagined, constructed as well as defended (Anderson 1983: 6; Acharya 2012: 12). Regions are imagined in the sense that territorial proximity and functional interaction are by themselves not adequate to constitute a region in the absence of an idea of the region, whether conceived from inside the region or outside. Regions like nation-states are socially constructed instead of being geographically or ethno-socially pre-ordained. Regions are social entities, emerging out of imagination, discourse and socialization (Acharya 2012: 24). A region is conceived both as an ideational as well as a material construct, existing and acting as a social entity, having its own rules of inclusion as well as exclusion, with its identity defined in relation to the perceived characteristics of other regions. The emergence of the imagined region of South Asia is the result of specific processes and practices and not through universal timeless fixed entities.

While trying to understand the origins of the region that came to be known as South Asia, it needs to be noted that the identity of the region has been constructed ideally by the political elites, but identity itself is a construction of political and social processes, something given and fragmented (Hall 1996: 1-17). While regions like nation-states constitute a form of imagined communities and are socially constructed, it is important to note that this very process of imagining and constructing a region depends on the interests of the framers, geopolitical players and stakeholders and it constitutes a political process to serve specific goals and interests. In this connection, the process of construction of the South Asian region reflects a 'power-knowledge nexus' in which several regional and global political actors are engaged in order to manage and control the region for their own political and strategic benefits and interests. In this context, the subsequent sections of the article will focus upon the manner in which the politics of 'region-mapping' in case of South Asia has been

intimately influenced by the colonial encounter and how the shadow of the colonial continue to hang over the post-colonial as far as the process of framing South Asia is concerned.

There are primarily four conventional criteria or foundational principles for identifying and defining a region, which are geography, culture, economy and geopolitics. With respect to defining a region, as far as geography is concerned, existence of natural geographical barriers like mountains, rivers and oceans serves to separate certain lands from others, thereby giving rise to the conception of a region as a separate, discreet piece of territory. The contemporary geographical literature has considered the imagined region of South Asia as a discreet region comprising of natural barriers in the form of mountain ranges, oceans and forests (Ayoob 1999). Second, geopolitics has also been another significant criterion for demarcating a region. In fact, geopolitics continues to be understood and used in a variety of ways. It has been invoked with reference to geographical assumptions and understandings that go into diverse framings of world politics. In case of South Asia, this line of argument has been advanced by scholars like Barry Buzan whose concept of 'regional security complexes' argued that certain parts of the world deserve to be seen as regions because the strategic calculations of states in these particular territories were highly dependent on the dynamics of conflict and cooperation with other states in these areas. Another criteria for demarcating a region is culture and it is necessary to note that cultural foundation of a region are frequently denoted as civilizational areas. The final basis for the contemporary discourse on region is that of economics. The claim that the immediate future is going to be characterized by a world comprising of several trade blocs represented as 'economic regions' constitute an excellent characterization of the economic rationale for a region. Arguments based on economics are increasingly becoming important criteria for demarcating a region. It is important to critically look into the way in which geography, culture, economics and geopolitics have been used at different periods to define and delineate the region that came to be known as South Asia.

These four criteria of making a region have been employed to demonstrate the naturalness and viability of a particular kind of framing of South Asia. In terms of geography, there exists a vast literature, which has identified South Asia as a geographically discreet region comprising of natural barriers like mountains and oceans that have been used to demonstrate the naturalness of the South Asian region. The geographical terminology of 'Sub-continent' has been particularly used to exhibit the physical unity of the imagined region of South Asia. Emphasizing the distinctiveness of the region, it has been argued that South Asia is a distinct geopolitical region, separated from the surrounding

areas by nature, culture, social differences, politics and to a considerable extent religion. While South Asia is not and never was a unified geopolitical region, it constitutes a distinct geographical region consisting of several cultural and human similarities that are quite distinct from the rest of Asia (Cohen 2009: 330; 348). In terms of mountain ranges, northern boundary comprising of Himalayan ranges like the Karakoram and the Hindukush mountains, the eastern boundary mountains and the thick forests along the India-Myanmar border and the western boundary consisting of mountains and deserts have been cited as providing natural boundaries to the South Asian region. The ocean periphery of the region consists of the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal with the islands of Maldives representing the southernmost edge of the natural region of South Asia. The principal objective behind this kind of a geographical demarcation is to show that the process of labelling is not a subjective framing of certain parts of the globe but that the South Asian region with all its boundaries are an empirical geographical fact, which can be discerned by any objective study of this particular area. However, it will be analyzed in the later sections of this article the different points of contestations against the very idea of imagining South Asia as a geographically distinct region.

Geopolitics constitutes another criterion, which is also open to contestations, for defining South Asia in objective terms. Barry Buzan's idea of a regional security complex forms an important part of demarcating the South Asian region (Buzan and Rizhi 1986: 31-32.). It has also been argued that South Asians remain as South Asians because they are part of a security complex. The primary theme of the argument that South Asia constitutes a region based on geopolitical factors is the centrality of the role of India in the security perception of all the other states in the South Asian region. South Asia has been regarded as a regional reality because the so-called South Asian security complex was well insulated from those around it like Myanmar provided insularity from Southeast Asia and Afghanistan did the same from the West Asia and the Gulf region.

The view that South Asia can be defined as a separate region in terms of shared cultural attributes can be seen from several accounts. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in his 'Discovery of India' where he argues that there exist a continuity of Indian cultural tradition of five thousand years of history in the Indian Sub-continent (Nehru 1985: 52). In recent times, India's former external affairs minister Jaswant Singh had argued that South Asia can be demarcated as one of the self-contained civilizational areas of the world (Singh 1999). Therefore, it has been claimed on the basis of the above arguments that a territorial space can be identified as South Asia on the basis of cultural similarities.

Like the use of criteria such as geography and culture, there have been attempts to conceive South Asia as a natural economic region with obvious inspiration from other similar cases from the Southeast Asian and the Northeast Asian region. The formation of the SAARC in 1985 marked the commencement of the attempt to define South Asia in economic terms. The enactment of the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), which was signed on 11 April, 1993 and entered into force in 1995, is often termed as an important development towards building economic linkages in the region. The agreement on SAPTA noted that the preferential trading arrangement is the first step towards higher levels of trade and economic cooperation in the region (Agreement on SAPTA 1993). In fact, SAPTA was considered to be the initial stepping stone towards the transition to a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) leading subsequently towards a customs union, common market and economic union. The SAFTA agreement was signed during the twelfth SAARC summit held at Islamabad on 06 January, 2004 with the intention of moving beyond SAPTA towards higher levels of intra-regional trade and economic cooperation by removing barriers to cross-border flow of goods (Agreement on SAFTA 2004). However, in spite of enactment of both SAPTA and SAFTA, economic cooperation among the states in the South Asian region has not yet reached the levels that were intended in the two agreements. The fact that almost all the South Asian states have followed inward looking development strategies unlike their counterparts in Southeast and Northeast Asia has been cited as an important basis of commonality shared by the states in the South Asian region. The economic criterion has been used as an instrument for demarcating the South Asian states through the prism of negative regionalization. This argument rests on the assumption that the South Asian region is composed of eight states (originally seven, who were founding members of SAARC) as they are distinct from the states in the adjacent regions of Southeast Asia and East Asia on the basis of the former's unimpressive economic growth rate since independence. The very idea of conceiving South Asia as an economic region is part of the project of demonstrating the so-called objective existence of a South Asian region.

Therefore, on all four conventional criteria of determining a region, South Asia as a distinct region has been un-problematically framed or constructed as comprising of seven sovereign states inhabiting a specific territorial space. The so-called 'natural region' of South Asia, as it is dominantly framed is proclaimed as an existing objective reality. The next section of this article will contest and problematize this dominant framing of the South Asian region by focusing on those areas, which have been ignored in the dominant representations of the region.

Contesting the Dominant Framing of South Asia

Two of the most important criteria of the dominant framing or representation of South Asia that requires a critical scrutiny are geography and geopolitics. It is important to analyze the reasons behind the exclusion as well as inclusion of certain areas or territories as far as the dominant representation of the imagined region of South Asia is concerned. The most important cases in this context are the exclusion of Myanmar and China from the South Asian region. Even Afghanistan, on the basis of geography and geopolitics, has long been considered either outside or on the margins of the territorial entity of South Asia.

Myanmar's exclusion from the dominant framing of South Asia on geographical grounds has been based on the presence of thick forests and the difficulty in accessibility of the territory from central India. But the presence of Burmese tribes on both sides of the Indo-Myanmar border debilitates the argument that Myanmar is excluded from South Asia due to impregnable natural geographical barriers. Although geographical factors have been highlighted as an important basis for Myanmar's exclusion from South Asia, a closer scrutiny reveals that the border between these two states are far from being impregnable and highly contested (Singh 2001: 10).

Moreover, although Myanmar is generally recognized as a Southeast Asian state, it is the only Southeast Asian country with which India shares a land border. In addition to this, Myanmar's exclusion from framing of South Asia assumes all the more significance since it was part of British Indian Empire till 1937. In fact, Myanmar is regarded as a land bridge between the South and the Southeast Asian region. It is worth noting in this connection that K.M. Panikkar during the Second World War quite eloquently expressed the strategic significance of Myanmar for the territory of India. K.M. Panikkar had argued that the defence of Myanmar (then Burma) is in fact the defence of India, and it is India's primary concern no less than Burma's to see that its frontiers remain inviolate. In fact, no responsibility can be considered too heavy for India when it comes to the question of defending Burma (Panikkar 1944: 46). From this standpoint, South Asia does not appear to be a discreet region as it has been represented and likewise, Myanmar's exclusion from the dominant framings of the South Asian territorial space can be contested.

The geographical case for excluding China from the dominant framing of the South Asian region is based on the assumption that the Himalayan mountains served as the natural barrier between China and the South Asian region. A critical analysis of this geographical basis of demarcation will reveal that this argument is rather simplistic (Singh 2001: 9). The border conflict of 1962 between India

and China had discredited the view that China is separated from South Asia by impregnable geographical frontiers. The very fact that the armed forces of both India and China had engaged in warfare over the issue of unsettled frontiers and are still trespassing into territories claimed by each other across the disputed frontier demonstrates the extremely contested nature of the territorial demarcation of South Asia. In geopolitical terms, large sections within the Indian strategic community views Pakistan as an immediate security irritant for India while China is viewed as the long term potential threat to India's security. The government of India's citing of China factor as the principal reason for India to carry out the second round of nuclear tests in May 1998 indicates the continuous centrality of China in Indian strategic thinking. Thus, the exclusion of China from the dominant representation of the South Asian region on geopolitical grounds can always be challenged.

Afghanistan constitutes another important case of exclusion from South Asia on the basis of geopolitics, although it became a formal member of SAARC only in 2007. But in spite of attaining membership of SAARC, Afghanistan is still considered to be on the margins of the dominant representations of the South Asian region. Historically, one of the reasons cited for this apparent exclusion is Afghanistan's insular position and it forms a line of demarcation between South Asia and the Middle East. However, this representation of regional interaction is silent on the very crucial security implications of ethno-nationalism and cross-border insurgency along with the role that Islam plays in South Asia (Chadda 1997). South Asia has some considerable amount of ethnic overlap and connections that transcends the boundaries of the nation-state. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have large population of Pashtoons who straddle the border, which was imposed on Afghanistan by the British and that was grudgingly accepted by the Afghan government in Kabul. The tribes on both sides of the border intermarry, trade, feud and celebrate with one another. They all adhere to the 'Pashtunwali', the tribal code of honour and behaviour that includes hospitality, which can never be denied to a fugitive and the right of revenge (Rashid 2008: 265–266). In 1893, Sir Morteimer Durand drew Afghanistan's present borders with the objective of creating a stable buffer between Tsarist Russia and British India.² The Durand line while defining the present boundaries of the Afghan state divided the Pashtoon tribes. The link between porous border across the

² After the partition of India in 1947, a Loya Jirga in Kabul declined to accept the Durand Line drawn by the British colonial government and declared that the border between Afghanistan and the then new state of Pakistan had to be redefined. Afghanistan even refused to recognize Pakistan's initial accession to the United Nations and laid claim over Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

Durand line separating Pakistan and Afghanistan, the flow of armed Islamic militants across this border and its overall implications for regional security including the conflictual state of relations between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is non-existent from the geopolitical basis of demarcating South Asia's territorial space. There are several credible reports that indicate the involvement of Islamic militants from Afghanistan in the ongoing insurgency in Kashmir and also during the Kargil conflict in May 1999. The close interconnections between the developments in Afghanistan, ethno-nationalism and the conflictual state of relations between India and Pakistan as well as sub-national movements within both the states have led several scholars to offer alternative framing of the South Asian region that includes Afghanistan.

Even in terms of cultural attributes, Afghanistan's initial exclusion from the dominant framings of the South Asian region can be contested. A critical reading of Afghanistan's location would indicate that the country's position in relation to South Asia is highly contested given the fact that Afghanistan is represented as part of Southwest Asia or Central Asia because of its Islamic character. Historically, during the era of the Mughal Empire, Afghanistan was tied to large parts of present South Asia through culture, religion and societal practices (Bose and Jalal 1998: 35-47). Apart from scholars of Indian history and culture, statesmen like Jawaharlal Nehru viewed Afghanistan as part of 'historic' India (Nehru 1985: 61). In the decade of 1960 and 1970, diehard Afghan Pashtun nationalists like former Afghan President Mohammad Daud even claimed that Afghanistan's boundaries extended up to the Indus river, well south of Peshawar, which if acknowledged would have cut the present territorial space of Pakistan into half (Rashid 2008: 267). As a result, any notion based on the dominant framing of South Asia even at present that Afghanistan is marginal to the region in terms of culture and civilization becomes problematic.

Finally, the economic basis for defining the South Asian region similar to that in Europe, Southeast Asia and North America is relatively of a recent nature, which emerged primarily after the establishment of SAARC in 1985. But SAARC has so far been ineffectual in fulfilling this objective. While other regional trade blocs have been based increasingly on trade liberalisation and financial flows within the trade bloc, the individual economies within South Asia are comparatively more inward-looking and resistant to trade and financial liberalisation, despite the existence of SAPTA since 1995 and the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) from 2004 onwards. The SAARC has so far remained as a non-starter, particularly in the economic arena. A striking example of the lack of adequate economic interaction among the South Asian states is the marginal level of intra-regional trade among them. With intra-regional trade at

less than 5% of total trade, South Asia is the least economically integrated region of the world in comparison to other regions like Europe and East Asia (The World Bank 2016). Intra-regional trade among the member states of the SAARC is among the lowest in the world. In fact, SAFTA has only made a very modest contribution in boosting intra-SAARC trade (Ranjan 2016). As a result, this economic basis of determining the South Asian region is probably the weakest of all other regional demarcating criteria and several scholars have viewed this criterion with great scepticism (Singh 2001: 13). Further, South Asia appears to be an incongruous region with minimal people to people contact and there is little sense among the people of the region of considering themselves as South Asians in a similar way that people of Europe consider themselves as Europeans (Snedden 2016: 8).

South Asia and the Politics of Region-Mapping

While identifying the various points of contestations of determining a region on the basis of geography, geopolitics, economics and culture, it is also important to evaluate the politics behind the present framing of the South Asian region. Moving beyond the idea that regions are social and imaginary constructs, this section will examine the politics behind framing a region in a particular way at a particular point of time and who benefits from such process of demarcation of a region. The power to label a particular territorial space and give it a specific meaning has served and continues to serve the interests of some and marginalise others. Therefore, Edward Said's link between knowledge and power can be attributed to regional images both during and after the colonial era (Said 1978; Fry 2000: 8). This particular connection between knowledge, power and the process of framing of the region that came to be known as South Asia will be the main focus of analysis of this section. It will try to emphasize how the process of 'knowledge as power' played a significant part in the colonial framing of India that continued in the post-colonial era with the framing of South Asia.

The interconnections between the colonial mappings of the 'Indian Sub-continent' and the colonial governance of the empire provide an important illustration of the links between knowledge, power and mapping a regional space. The need to label, delineate and frame British India derived from the need to have knowledge of the area that has been colonised and by giving certain essences to people residing in the region, it served the purpose of Edward Said's idea of 'knowledge as power'. So the British colonial government's policy of demarcating India through modern scientific tools of map-making created an imagined India that was a rational ordered space, which could be managed and

governed in a rational and ordered manner (Edney 1997: 3). After having colonised a certain portion of the surface of the earth, the British tried to demonstrate through the modern disciplines of geography, cartography and archaeology the existence of natural unity of the territorial space they are governing, which sets it off from those spaces that had not been colonised. Knowing India and giving common singular essences to this piece of territorial space enabled the British to know India in ways that would sustain colonial authority and through simplistic categories that were fundamentally distinct from Europe. It is in this context that the exclusion of Afghanistan from the colonial framings of India assumes importance as the exclusion of Afghanistan from the category of South Asia in the post-colonial setting can be explained to a considerable extent in terms of the continuation of the practice of exclusion through the mode of ‘knowledge as power’ (Singh 2001: 16-17). The exclusion of Afghanistan from the colonial framing of India was largely a result of the British inability or lack of interest in colonising this area. There are several accounts, which have documented the inability of the British Colonial government in India to conquer and effectively exercise its authority over Afghanistan. There exists an undeniable link between the colonial attitude towards Afghanistan and the framing of India by the British. From the dawn of the British colonial period and continuing into the post-colonial era, the exclusion of Afghanistan from India was not based on certain essential civilizational or geographical factors but more on the basis of governance and control (Singh 2001: 18). Therefore, any territory which the British could effectively conquer and govern as a single administrative unit was represented as India and Afghanistan was excluded from this particular framing.

This process of exclusion of Afghanistan from British India continued into the post-colonial era with the framing of South Asia throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Independent India, which in many ways can be considered to be a successor state to British India continued with the practice of using ‘knowledge as power’ to exclude Afghanistan from the framing of the South Asian region. In almost the same manner like the earlier British colonialists, the independent Indian state had initially attempted to give the idea of South Asia an essentialist, singular meaning by showing Afghanistan’s exclusion from South Asia as natural. The idea of South Asia was framed in a synonymous and compatible manner with the idea of post-colonial India by large sections of the Indian political elites. Till the end of the twentieth century, the Indian state has been reluctant towards the idea of including Afghanistan as part of South Asia for political and strategic reasons. With the emergence of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan since September 1996 till it got dislodged

from power in the wake of ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ launched by the US and its allies after the 9/11 terror attacks in the US, Indian government had not been favourable to the idea of including Afghanistan within the imagined South Asian region. However, after the dislodging of the Taliban regime from power in Afghanistan in October 2001 and the ascendency of the US supported Hamid Karzai led government in Afghanistan, India’s long held reluctance to include Afghanistan within the imagined region of South Asia gradually started to change. The Hamid Karzai led regime provided India with greater advantages to protect its political, economic and strategic interests in the region with regard to Pakistan by cultivating closer engagement than had been done by previous regimes in Afghanistan. India’s decision to support Afghanistan’s entry into the SAARC was as much strategic as it was commercial. Strategically, this drew Afghanistan into the South Asian regional matrix where India looms large (Sharma 2011: 111-112). As a result India’s long held reluctance against including Afghanistan in the process of framing South Asia began to change. It also marked the beginning of the gradual process of incorporation of Afghanistan within SAARC that was completed in 2007.

It is through the exclusion of Afghanistan by the mode of ‘knowledge as power’ that one can try to understand Pakistan’s attempt to define itself as part of the wider Islamic fraternity and argue that instead of being part of the imaginary construct of South Asia, it is rather a part of the Middle East or West Asia. Thus, the politics of framing South Asia also involves on one hand the attempts by the Indian state to exercise power through representing and framing South Asia in a particularistic, singular manner and resistance by the Pakistani state to this process of exercising ‘knowledge as power’. Before 1947, the glorious history of Muslim rule and cultural achievements in South Asia made it rather impossible for Muslims to accept a subordinate position in what saw as a future Hindu dominated India. By the same token, for a considerable time since 1947 and even today, Pakistanis in general have a feeling that they must not only compete with India, but they must compete on equal footing and to accept anything less would amount to a humiliating betrayal (Lieven 2012: 42). This mindset, which is prevalent among a majority of Pakistanis, is also reflected in the attempt by the Pakistani state to resist the very idea of South Asia that it views as India centric in nature. The Pakistani state and more particularly the Pakistan military is rather unwilling to solely consider Pakistan as part of South Asia as it perceives the present construction of the idea of South Asia as one that is dominated by India. Moreover, what constitutes Pakistan at present strongly contests any uncritical assumption that it is a part of the existing boundaries of South Asia.

The demographic compositions in Pakistan's four provinces are varied. Those who inhabit the Pakistani provinces of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan have very different cultural roots and relationships with very different geographical regions. People from these provinces tend to look west and north-westwards rather than eastwards unlike their Punjabi or Mohajir countrymen. Not only do have markedly different languages and cultures, but by being on the fringe of British India, they have remained a fair distance from the core experiences of what has been regarded as colonialism. For those who are residing in NWFP or Baluchistan, Ferghana valley, Kabul and Iran is much nearer to them than any idea of South Asia, which is for most Pakistanis an India dominated one, both in form and substance. Their interest in promoting the idea of South Asia can only be political and hardly cultural. Therefore, the constituency to promote any idea of South Asia does not appear to be appealing when seen from the Pakistani side, both from the point of view of the military state's ideology and also from that of the Baloch and the Pashtoons because of their primary identity based locations (Zaidi 2009: 38). Perhaps the only ethnic groups within Pakistan, which have a desire to belong to South Asia, are the Punjabis, the largest and most powerful of all ethnic groups within Pakistan and the Mohajirs, as large sections among them came from India after partition.

There has also been growing Islamisation in Pakistan since the time of former President Zia-ul-Haq that facilitated the process of crystallising Pakistan's Islamic identity through building closer political, economic and religious links with Sunni Wahabi Islam of Saudi Arabia. With support from the state, there has been a rise in social conservatism across Pakistan, reflected in acceptance and assimilation of perceived Islamic symbols. After 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, the slow trend of social conservatism among Pakistani Muslims have taken a sharper and more accentuated Islamic turn. This increasing association and identity with Islamic countries have made Pakistan turn towards the Middle East, thereby relatively ignoring its links with the South Asian region. The fact that the Pakistan's Muslim association and identity is made with the Middle East than within South Asia, which also has huge Muslim population in both India and Bangladesh reiterates the view that Pakistan's desire to belong to South Asia in a locational and historical sense is much weaker than its desire to belong to an identity that is extra-locational in nature (Zaidi 2009: 39).

Myanmar's (earlier Burma) exclusion from the dominant framings of the South Asian region shows an important link between power, knowledge and region-mapping. An integral part of the dynamic of excluding Myanmar from

the dominant framings of South Asia is that of War and strategic planning. The framings of Southeast Asia and the strategic interests that led to Myanmar's inclusion within the Southeast Asian region also correspondingly help us in understanding Myanmar's exclusion from South Asia. One of the most important influences on the exclusion of Myanmar from the South Asian region was the Japanese occupation of Myanmar under British colonial rule during the Second World War. The Japanese occupation of the country during the Second World War and the inability of the British to defend it marked an important boundary between the two colonies of the then British empire. It was the Japanese occupation of Myanmar during the Second World War, which placed the country firmly within the Southeast Asia command under the Allied Powers led by US and Great Britain in 1943. The establishment of the Southeast Asia command under the Allied Powers in 1943 was a major step in the military and political identification of the region that came to be known as Southeast Asia. From this standpoint, the Second World War in the Pacific catalyzed the definition of Southeast Asia as a distinct region (Crozier 2006: 13; Weatherbee 2009: 7). As a result, for the purpose of war and strategic planning during the Second World War, Myanmar was gradually becoming part of Southeast Asia and excluded from the category of South Asia. Myanmar's exclusion from South Asia was closely linked to war and strategic planning. The exclusion of Myanmar from the present demarcation of the South Asian region has thus been significantly influenced by colonial objectives and interests (Singh 2001: 27). It reflects another case of the politics of region-mapping in South Asia.

This exclusion of Myanmar from South Asia during the colonial period was continued even during the post-colonial era. The role of the US in international affairs in the period after the end of the Second World War contributed to the process of Burma's exclusion from the dominant framings of the region known as South Asia. The self-perceived role of the US towards protecting liberal democracy against international communism during the Cold War era had significant ramifications for determining the boundaries of the South Asian region. The US political and military intervention in Vietnam and the resultant 'domino theory' that accompanied it linked strategic planning to region mapping. Myanmar's place in Southeast Asia became significant to the US because in the event of Indo-Chinese states falling under communism, there was the apprehension that both Thailand and neighbouring Myanmar would become vulnerable. Therefore the link between US strategic interests, Myanmar and the mapping of the Southeast Asian region becomes clear. Myanmar was framed as part of Southeast Asia instead of being a part of South Asia because it suited US strategic interests at that point of time (Singh 2001: 28).

Conclusion

Several decades after its emergence and increasing use in regional and international institutional platforms, the term South Asia remains largely debated and often contested as an artificial and exogenous category. This article has tried to focus on how the process of ‘knowledge as power’ played a significant part in the colonial framing of British India that continued in the post-colonial era with the framing of South Asia. Further, it is also significant that the process of region-mapping in itself is not a value-free activity and has always been designed to serve the interests of the framers at different points of time. Initially, the term South Asia evolved as a category to divide the Asian continent in the wake of establishment of area studies in the US after the Second World War since there was a strategic interest within the US to study different parts of Asia as the Second World War had highlighted the paucity of specialists dealing with the region. In fact, the term South Asia is a post-colonial construction that Western geo-strategic analysts have created in order to describe what was earlier, directly or indirectly the British Empire (Snedden 2016: 5). There is nothing natural or objective about the territorial space that has been represented as South Asia. In fact, most of the attempts to define the region are fairly arbitrary and the boundaries of the imagined region of South Asia are also uncertain (Joshi 2003: 6). The very idea of South Asia is neither a product of shared world view nor is it based on proximity and the issue of who are included as well as excluded from this imaginary construct is still highly contested. The cases of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan and even China are clear illustrations of the difficulty, which one will confront while performing the task of defining what the region of South Asia actually is.

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From Decolonial to the Postcolonial: Trauma of an Unfinished Agenda

M. Satish Kumar*

Taking the cue from Amitava Ghosh (Ghosh 2007), growing up during the decolonial period of India, my dominant memory was one of how India was struggling to create its own identity and reality rather than competing with its neighbours and the world at large. As an Indian, discarding the fixation of trying to prove to be a successor state to the erstwhile imperial entity was no longer relevant. Indeed this was largely the case of our neighbours in South Asian and in the African continent. The role of progressive politics in the development of a postcolonial method seems critical when dealing with the unfinished agenda of decolonisation. If postcolonial method invites a critical examination of the material and discursive legacies of colonialism, the emphasis would largely dominate around questions of identity, race, and culture. Decolonisation as a political method would demand a commitment towards dealing with the critical questions of regional and global inequalities and injustices. The conflation between a ‘postcolonial’ and that of decolonial method by ardent advocates has resulted in the generic obfuscation of issues of inequality, ethics and justice across regions at large.

The Bandung Conference of 1955 marked the positioning of a decolonial thinking. There is a fundamental difference between Fanon’s (1963) decolonisation and our perceptions of decoloniality. The former relates to the sphere of the state and involves both the domestic or internal relations and interstate relations. Decoloniality on the other hand is far more inter-subjective and relates naturally to the critical interstices of race, gender, and class lines. In other words, “there are colonial epistemic and ontological differences between the two...” (Debashi 2015: xli). Decolonisation therefore implies a systematic transition from one of colonial ‘dependency’ to republican ‘sovereignty’. Decolonisation therefore manifests itself as an externally initiated process distinct from dismantling of internal forms of dependency, e.g. the reorganisation of Indian states and principalities. Decolonisation also can be seen as a form of reshuffling of colonial possessions among imperial powers, e.g. Dutch or French or German hegemonic engagements. Here the rise of a hegemonic state becomes the larger evil with the debatable planks of decolonisation and postcolonial interpretations.

*Director of Internationalism, School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen’s University, Belfast.

Postcolonialism on the other hand continues to have a major impact in the academia. As a field, postcolonial theory highlights how knowledge is a situated entity, producing a universalising idea, which emanated largely from the ‘western’ confines of the imperialising Europe (Said 1993; 1999). At the same time one also needs to acknowledge that these ideas are constantly being revised and conditioned by its places of origin (Clayton 2000; Lester 2003). With the advent of a ‘cultural turn’ and the rise of postmodern interpretations from the triumvirate collective of Edward Said (Said 1978, 1993, 1999), Gayatri Spivak (Spivak 1999) and Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1992), decolonial studies unfortunately became unfashionable and went into a deep coma. So while “postcolonialism provided challenging opportunities to explore the spatiality of the colonial and neo-colonial discourses and the spatial politics of representation” (McEwan, 2003: 340), decolonial studies was shunted into the discarded railway-yard of oblivion.

Postcolonialism has been defined as “a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production, demanding attention to a diversity of perspectives and priorities...” (Raghuram and Madge, 2006:277). On the other hand, decolonisation was considered as a political method enabling a far more fruitful engagement with issues of global marginalisation of peripheral voices, e.g. Aleppo in Syria, or the Rohingya of Myanmar or indeed the Kadiyans of Pakistan. Such a postcolonial method does not enable the provincializing of the privileged First World. Rather than seeking to follow Dipesh Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty 2000: 16) to renew European thought from and for the margins, it would be far more helpful to reinforce the point that Non-Europeans too can ‘Think’! Today there is a renewed attempt to racialise and deify political conflict across the regions of the world. Postcolonial method in particular has failed in penetrating this maze of deliberate obfuscation of religion, identity and race being witnessed today. The way to rectify this anomaly is to revisit the decolonial strands of the unfinished project of nation building, freedom and nationalism which remains peppered across the diverse regions of the world.

The question is whether postcolonialism as an ‘ideology’ and as a ‘method’ has become ‘hegemonic’ to discard the critical global dilemmas of race, religion and identity within the increasingly embedded framework of dominant neoliberal ideology. In a way postcolonial approach emerged, once the ‘decolonial present’ started to fade away from the national collective memory of erstwhile imperial regimes and their former colonies. Postcoloniality therefore becomes a “condition of pessimism” (Appiah, 1991: 353), or what Amitava Ghosh states “postcolonial essentially describes you as negative” (Ghosh 2007:

105). Postcolonialism in essence, today continues to exhibit its complicity with a neoliberal market economy (Sethi 2011).

Different stages of history do present us with an opportunity to take a stance of being either postcolonial or decolonial. Thus engaging with the questions of Kashmir, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China or indeed Tibet becomes largely decolonial than a postcolonial project (Bhambra 2014). Whereas reflecting on the unfinished projects of socio-economic and political development in the North East of India or Kashmir, remains largely a postcolonial question.

In essence postcoloniality is generally anchored in postmodernity and decolonisation and decoloniality is hitched to the legacies of the Bandung event of 1955. The challenge was one of engaging with the critical nuances of political decolonisation much in the sameness, as Brexit agenda looms large in the horizons of United Kingdom today. The fundamental difference being that while the Brexit is still mired in ‘Euro-centred’ epistemology, the political decolonisation as witnessed in the erstwhile colonies reiterated a ‘decolonial epistemology’, which was distinct from the Eurocentric legacies. Decolonial, as a political construct need not be articulated with the assistance of an imperial/European baggage. Perhaps the postcolonial has become a ‘fixated’ normal in the present context!

The trap of an embedded postcolonial way of thinking to my mind suggests that nation states and their scholars are more keen to seek an avoidance of the unfinished agenda of political decolonisation. According to Terry Eagleton, ‘Postcolonialism’, like postmodernism in general, is among other things a brand of culturalism, which inflates the significance of cultural factors in human affairs... ‘Postcolonialism’ has been on the whole stronger on identity than on the IMF, more fascinated by marginality than by markets (Eagleton 1998: 26). Thus postcolonialism loses out in the political gamesmanship when dealing with the intractable boundary question or that of political self-determination in the shatter zones of the world.

In conclusion, scholars like M. Miyoshi berate us about our continued reluctance and a literal ‘head-in-the sand approach’, as we debate about the relevance of postcolonialism and decolonialism in metropolitan academia. He states, “We ignore [the trauma of] those billions outside our ongoing discourse for whom life has nothing ‘post’ about it” (Miyoshi 1995:54). Incomplete decolonisation projects, post-independence struggles are all inscribed as a post-colonial event. The Palestinians continue its *Intifada* against West Bank Occupation, just as the Kashmiris or the Tibetans call for greater *Azadi* and self-determination, and the complete erasure of the ancient Tamil heritage in Jaffna raises minimal eyebrows among the protagonists of colonial and

postcolonial theories. Postcolonial theorists continue to epistemologically and ontologically degrade the decolonised ‘Others’ by erasures and silences of that very identity and cultures it has avowed to protect and highlight. Decolonial in this sense remains an unfinished agenda.

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The Postcolonial Challenge: Some Critical Notes

Sobhanlal Datta Gupta*

I

Postcolonialism has now come of age. Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 postcolonialism has become a kind of buzzword, the conceptual presence of which is hardly contestable. This essay will specifically focus on the questions that postcolonialism has raised and the kind of responses that it has evoked. D.A.Washbrook, despite his criticisms of Said, has very ably identified the impact of his contributions on a new understanding of colonialism in four distinct ways (Washbrook 1999: 599-602). First, it changed the traditional imperialist perception of the Orient. Previously it was assumed that the colonizers were the subjects and agents of imperial history; now the discourse of colonialism revealed how it invented a cultural strategy to dominate the people in the colonies, the colonizers being now defined, "almost to the point of caricature, as representatives of the manly, the civilized, and the white". Second, the mechanisms by using which the colonialists represented their subjects in the colonies, were put under the scanner and it was exposed how the massive apparatus of colonial administration, built up on things like census, ethnography, land-settlement reports, museums etc, products as they were of European modernity, were essentialized, serving thereby the interests of the imperial authority in the name of science and reason. Third, it was now possible to establish how this imaginary construction of the Orient resulted in the launching of many projects and ideas under colonialism involving the people in the colonies but "which trapped them in a web of beliefs and values which validated European superiority". Fourth, the issue of how the subject people can represent themselves gave rise to the Subaltern History project, the accent being on the voice of the marginalized, the outcast and the nameless.

On conceptual level postcolonialism has raised two central questions. First, it has exposed the tall claims of Orientalism, the argument being that European Orientalists are ontologically grounded in a false reading of the Orient. Second, as against the West's 'othering' of the non-Western world, the East has to assert and celebrate its identity. Its philosophical implications are quite far-reaching. It refers to postcolonialism's notion of difference, which can be viewed from two angles. One: difference is primarily a negative notion vis-à-vis its other and involves simultaneously the idea of continuous slippage, alterity, a sense

*Retired Surendranath Banerjea Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta.

of eternal postponement or deference of meaning, to take the cue from Derrida. Two: it has a positive dimension too in the sense that it espouses the notion of identity. But this, again, generates a two-fold problem on two levels. On one level it validates the politics of recognition of identities, which has a positive connotation in the sense it has a notion of stability and fixity involved in it. On another level there is an element of instability too which goes into the making of identities in two different ways. First: identities being plural and overlapping, how to fix identity? Two: Is there any authentic, primordial identity at all? (Tully 2003: 517-33). In such a blurred perspective, can any agenda of anti-colonial struggle in the true sense of the term be formulated?

II

The questions raised by postcolonialism are distinctively radical in tone and may certainly be viewed as counters to the Eurocentric justification of colonialism. But long before the advent of postcolonialism the Eurocentric defence of colonialism was contested by Marxism. Postcolonialism, however, refuses to endorse this claim and argues, on the contrary, that Marxism itself belongs to the Eurocentric grid. This is a virtual restatement of the standard postmodern position that Marxism is an integral component of the Enlightenment narrative and is thereby infected with the virus of modernity. Two examples are in order. Bhikhu Parekh, an otherwise trenchant critic of Eurocentrism, subscribes to the standard postcolonial position that, for Marxism, colonialism was a historically necessary progressive force, Marx's writings on India being the point of reference. Lenin is not also spared. While acknowledging that Lenin, Trotsky and their associates lent their support to anticolonial struggles in the non-Western world, for them independence of colonies had largely an instrumental value only in their quest for communism, since the colonized masses were not allowed to choose an alternative roadmap of future which would conform to their own history and tradition. (Parekh 2014: 188-191). The same position is reiterated, in fact, much more vociferously, by Hobson in his otherwise great scholarly work *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* when, drawing on *Communist Manifesto*, *Capital* and *The German Ideology*, he observes, "Marx's whole theory of history faithfully reproduces the Orientalist or teleological story." (Hobson 2004: 13).

The standard counterargument of Marxism in response to these allegations broadly draws its support from Marx's key concept, namely, class. Post-colonialism's obsession with the autonomization of culture, it is argued, divests it of any radicalism proper, as it delinks the cultural strategy of colonialism from the larger socio-economic issues of political and economic struggles. The late

Stuart Hall, for instance, warned that the play of deconstruction and difference builds up a fantasy in the sense that one may easily fall into the trap of assuming that, “because essentialism has been deconstructed *theoretically*, therefore it has been displaced *politically*” (emphasis original) (Hall 1996: 249). Post-colonialism, in other words, shelves the political project of emancipation. This issue has been highlighted perhaps most forcefully by Arif Dirlik. Basically he focuses on two criticisms of postcolonialism. First, postcolonialism in its methodology delinks the cultural issue from the totality of the world economy of capitalism and thereby fails to locate the centrality of power from where colonialism derives its strength. Thus Eurocentrism, the target of post-colonialism, is ultimately a political and not just a cultural construction for its being an effect of global capitalism (Dirlik 2000: 207-36). Second, he prefers the term “post-revolutionary” to the expression “postcolonial”, for contemporary postcolonialism, he alleges, actually eschews revolutionary options, and its inclination to abstract the issue of culture from politics is a denial of recognition of the revolutionary radicalisms of the past. (Dirlik 2000: 25-48).

Aijaz Ahmad, another uncompromising critic of postcolonialism, questions its claims on two levels. On one level, like Arif Dirlik, he targets the post-colonial strategy of blurring of the political in the name of culturalism, since the determinate structures of political and economic power, against which real struggles for emancipation are to be launched, are never made visible. On another level he criticizes the anarchy and irrationalism unleashed by post-colonialism’s total denunciation of Western civilization simply as the play of power, making the agenda of resistance and struggle impossible and irrelevant. Vivek Chibber in his recent critique of postcolonialism in *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013) argues that the centrality of the sweep of capital is the reality of history, its impact being virtually totalistic, since the birth of capitalism and the West as well as the East, the metropolitan countries and the colonies, fall within the orbit of capitalism, recognizing, however, the fact that the impact has been grossly uneven. Chibber’s salvos were largely directed against Dipesh Chakrabarty’s reading of subaltern history vide his major work *Provincializing Europe* (2000) its central thesis being, following Ranajit Guha’s well known work *Dominance without Hegemony* (1997), that capitalism’s expansion remained confined to the Global North, while the Global South remained outside its purview. Consequently, in the colonies no proper class formation took place and the bourgeoisie in the colonies, unlike its counterpart in the West, was unable to play any progressive, hegemonic role, resulting in the birth of the subaltern as an autonomous category here (Chibber 2014). Among the Indian historians Sumit Sarkar also basically shares

the understanding that in the postcolonial framework of culturalism the idea of the state as the central repository of political power virtually evaporates; moreover, he strongly denounces the “Saidian” turn in postcolonialism which has virtually erased the classical Marxist concerns of imperialism and colonialism, making the issue of political power irrelevant and, like Ahmad, he is particularly critical of postcolonialism’s total dismissal of Enlightenment as an undifferentiated and homogenous expression of repression, power, control and violence. This postcolonial strategy of targeting the Enlightenment as the main enemy, according to Sarkar, completely occludes any agenda of struggle and resistance in the political arena and becomes a major challenge to Marxism (Sarkar 2002: 154-94).

What, however, needs to be added to these counter-arguments is the more recent understanding that Marx’s position on colonialism demands a drastic reformulation in the light of his later writings, when he begins to shift his attention to the East, very specifically Russia, from the West. This may be described as the “Russian” phase of his life, which refers to the 1870s, following the fall of the Paris Commune and the virtual extinction of the hope of revolution in the advanced West. Kolja Lindner in a recent article has shown, after examining the writings of the late Marx, that there are at least two evidences to contest the Eurocentric allegations against Marx. First: in his later writings, especially in his *Ethnological Notebooks* (1880-1882), Marx highlighted the economic superiority of communal property over the western notion of private property and in this endeavour he was greatly motivated by the eastern phenomenon, namely, the Russian rural commune (*mir*) with its collective style of functioning, Second: there was a distinct shift in the late Marx’s reflections on India, since he was no longer talking of the regenerative role of British rule; instead he now castigated in very strong terms English vandalism of Indian society (Lindner 2010: 27-41). No less significant is Kevin Anderson’s path-breaking work *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (2010), which locates Marx in a non-Eurocentric perspective.

III

The logical consequence of postcolonialism has been the birth of nativism represented, most vigorously by scholars like Claude Alvares and his colleagues, who, while pleading for an alternative and autonomous discourse of social sciences in the non-Western societies, call for a virtual *jihad* against Western social sciences, since they are allegedly Eurocentric (Alvares and Faruqi 2012; Alvares 2014). They have a two-fold argument. First, they have unearthed a huge

mass of data hidden deep inside local traditions and cultures of a large group of Afro-Asian and Latin American countries and have shown how important and relevant the ancient wisdom of these non-Western societies is for construction of appropriate social sciences for the third world, free from the trappings of Eurocentrism. This project of redesigning the curricula of social sciences by inducting new inputs, which were either lost, forgotten or decimated, because of years of colonial domination in most of the cases, is, undoubtedly very bold, challenging and innovative. A number of countries representing South and South East Asia and the Far East, for example, figure in a big way in this research programme. While the innovative nature of this kind of nativist enterprise of course, needs to be appreciated, it becomes a serious problem when in the name of sanitizing the Universities infected, allegedly, with the virus of Eurocentrism, as a knowledge system with its own cognitive value the entry of Western social sciences in our academia is opposed in principle. This strategy of celebration of nativism would straightway lead to vindication of revivalism, uncritical deification of the past being its cornerstone. Moreover, this would actually neutralize the positive contributions of this school which has undertaken the exercise of reinventing the past and redefine the parameters of social sciences in a new light. While academic servility in regard to the West is not certainly desirable, uncritical celebration of nativism is also not the answer, because the distinction between the epistemic value of a knowledge system and the ideological bias underlying it must be kept in mind.

This, in fact, reminds one of the outlook of the Proletkult group in regard to Western ideas in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. Overenthusiastic as its members were, they called for a total rejection of anything that is non-Marxist and pleaded for circulation of Marxist literature alone and tried to convince Lenin accordingly. Lenin severely reprimanded them by arguing that this was a stupid and dangerous argument, since any proper understanding of Marxism necessitated a thorough mastery of all that capitalism had produced in course of its long history. The logic underlying Lenin's argument was that the distinction between capitalism as an ideology and the knowledge system that it has produced in history must be kept in mind. Kwame Anthony Appiah, writing on the basis of African experience, warns the reader that the so-called postcolonial intellectual in Africa is essentially Westernized, if not a 'comprador', and cannot claim to be a representative of any authentic Africanism. Moreover, African art and culture, precisely because of their nativist branding, have now become profitable commodities in the West, as they have been appropriated by the Western market. Therefore, the claim of traditionalism ultimately becomes self-defeating (Appiah 1997: 55-71).

IV

What emanates from this discussion is, therefore, a third position, namely. It contests the West's bid for universalization of its own self and as against the East *contra* West position it calls for defending the East *and* the West position. It is a position that does neither endorse the West's universalization of the self for the rest of the world nor downplay the knowledge system produced by the Occident in absolute terms. Furthermore, this is an understanding which does not validate the East to the exclusion of the West. This can be interpreted as a new notion of universalization, namely, that of negotiation between the East and the West. A number of interrelated issues need to be addressed in this context. First, a distinction is to be kept in mind between recognition and celebration of identity and localism. While it is certainly true that the sweep of Western modernity has erased the autonomy of micro identities in the non-European world and has viewed the East with a coloured vision, celebration of the micro to the exclusion of the macro opens up the grave possibility of ushering in tides of violence and repression in the name of valorization and universalization of its own self. That celebration of identity may lead to oppression of the minority by the majority within a particular community is thoughtfully explained by Amartya Sen, for example, in 1998, in his Rommanes Lectures delivered at the Oxford University in the light of the following propositions (Sen 1999: 19-27). First: is it justified that the scepticism about modernist rationality should necessarily lead to valorization of identity? As Sen warns us, while taking up a critical position vis-à-vis communitarianism, there is a danger underlying the communitarian argument that the individual "discovers" his self only in his community identity, since this makes an absolute of the community identity of the individual, denying him of any choice. Thus Sen argues: "To deny plurality, choice and reasoning in identity can be source of repression, new *and* old, as well as a source of violence and brutality. The need for delineation, important as it is, is perfectly compatible with the recognition of plurality, of conflicting loyalties, of demands of justice and mercy, as well as of affection and solidarity. Choice is possible and important in individual conduct and social decisions, even if we remain oblivious of it" (emphasis original). Second: there is no necessary conflict between reason and identity in the sense that it would be a dangerous claim to argue that micro identity alone, namely, the individual's belongingness to an ethnic group, for instance, gives him the real power to reason; because there is a distinction, as Sen points out, between how our reasoning is influenced by a particular cultural tradition, flowing from the concerned community, and how it is determined fully by other influences, coming from other cultures provided the choice is given. Third:

making an absolute of identity politics leads to a kind of epistemological relativism in ethics whereby ethnic groups claim to be cognitive or moral islands by espousing the notion of difference. This may straightway act as a justification for the worst kind of fundamentalism and conservatism in the name of contraposing reason and identity.

The noted Malaysian scholar S.F. Alatas thus warns against the danger of emphasizing the autonomy of social sciences in the name of promoting nativism, notwithstanding appreciation of the importance of the nativist tradition. Referring to the Asian context it is argued by his scholar father, S.H. Alatas, that, while it is a historical imperative that social sciences in the Asian societies should be deeply anchored in their own traditions, history and culture, this should not result in celebration of nativism in uncritical terms. Rather, as distinct from nativism, an autonomous social science tradition “would raise its own problems and develop concepts and methods that are appropriate to the treatment of those problems and it would isolate itself from knowledge from the West and elsewhere.” (Alatas 2006: 112) Accordingly, three types of knowledge are distinguished by him, which would cater to the idea of an autonomous social science based on negotiation between the East and the West rather than a nativist perspective which contraposes the East and the West and valorizes the East to the exclusion of the West. These three types of knowledge are: (a) Universally valid knowledge, which is of permanent value to the non-Western societies; (b) Knowledge of the West, which is of little interest to developing societies. (c) Knowledge of the West, which is of comparative value to developing societies. (Alatas 2006: 112-113)

This negotiated understanding, based on a dialogue between the West and the East, therefore, holds high the notion of an Asian social science, based not on nativism but on a negotiated understanding. It is this alternative understanding which calls for negotiation between more South-South rather than North-South dialogue in the field of social sciences. (Sinha-Kerkhoff and Alatas 2013). This is a perspective which questions the postcolonial glorification of identity and localism to the exclusion of anything macro and the universal. What emerges from this debate is that uncritical admiration of neither the Eurocentric notion of modernity nor nativism would ultimately promote any proper understanding of the complexities of non-European societies. The problem becomes particularly complicated, since even among the Western Orientalists there is no unanimity in their perception of the East. Wilhelm Halbfass, the noted German Indologist, in his magisterial study *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (1988) in fact, draws the attention of the reader to the differences between Hegel's rather Eurocentric view of India and Schopenhauer's and Schelling's relatively

more positive perception. (Halbfass 1988: 84-120). Fred Dallmayr, taking the cue from Halbfass, points out that the call for an exit from Orientalism simply by rejection of the Western categories is not the solution. Rather the alternative strategy should be one of a cross-cultural negotiation between the Orient and the Occident, which would steer clear of any kind of essentialism, whether of the West or the East.

Halbfass, in his reply to the debate on his book made a very thoughtful remark that the dominant understanding that universalism is an evil, because of its association with Western modernity, requires rethinking. To cite his words, “However, we should not present universalism in general as some kind of evil spirit that has to be exorcised at any cost and in all its manifestations. Some kind of universalism, some claim to a privileged viewpoint seems to be inherent in the formation of culture itself.” (Dallmayr 2007: 49-70). Pleading, therefore, for a cross-cultural dialogue, he then points out, ‘Cross-cultural dialogue does not take place in the form of a simple I-Thou relationship. We may expect some kind of “third” or external standpoint into the relationship and the dialogue, a standpoint from which not only the other, but also the dialogic relationship itself can be faced and assessed. Likewise, they will have certain claims and preoccupations concerning the space and framework in which the encounter and dialogue take place. There are, of course, more or less pervasive, more or less obtrusive universalisms, and they may be more or less detrimental to the dialogue process. It is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate all of them. There is at least one kind of universalism, one fundamental universalistic assumption without which dialogue and understanding themselves would be impossible: the assumption that we and our “others”, partners in the hermeneutic process, are living in a world of shared or shareable meanings’ (Dallmayr 2007: 152). This idea of a cross-cultural encounter, understanding or dialogue, of course, on equal terms, professing the idea of the East *and* the West rather than East *contra* West perhaps is the only alternative to the kind of predicament that non-European societies are facing today in the age of globalization. As an intellectual intervention postcolonialism has raised of course, a set of very big and important questions but the strategy it espouses is not the answer, if we have to live through the world that we confront in our everyday life.

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Western/Non-Western IR: A Note on the Ontological and Epistemic Disjuncture

Shibashis Chatterjee*

In this commentary, my central argument is as follows: The non-West is in many ways not constituted in the same way as the West and their differences are critical for the making of a genuinely dialogic theory of human emancipation that recognizes the role of historical, cultural, and social differences that the survival based accounts of mainstream International Relations (IR) theory tends to either flatten or eliminate altogether. What need to be problematized in the discipline's interrogation of the non-Western world are the conceptual histories of the nation-state, nationalism, sovereignty, territoriality, security, and identity. In a nutshell, we require historicising the meanings of the state, nation, the imaginations of political community and the constitution of territorial units upon a pre-existing landscape of a plethora of identities to make sense of the nature and causes of violence and conflicts in the non-Western world. Whether understanding these differences require us to adopt 'non-Western' episteme remains a vexing question. I shall argue against the viability of such a move.

The problem with IR theorising is that mostly these are based on Western ideas, experiences, and practices having narrow cognitive horizons. Hence, some scholars have argued that even those who are marginalised under the existing power relations nevertheless go on perpetuating that dominance system. Acharya and Buzan's celebrated volume has sought to explain this apparently contradictory trend. Their quest is to search for a non-Western IR theory that is not self-consciously predicated upon the assumptions of Western IR. Western IR had been a thoroughly metropolitan activity that grew up through the dominant power's interactions with the non-Western world. While realism was not entirely unknown to the non-Western world, it developed primarily as a Western, or more specifically, American theory, under conditions that did not exist in most other parts of the world. The neat binary of the inside and the outside was a Western construct that had little relevance for the non-Western states. In the post-colonial world, most conflicts were on issues of domestic political control, ethnicity, and community. Security was less a matter of guarding borders against external predation and more about securing them against internal threats. Malnutrition, poverty, and deadly diseases took far more life than inter-state war. States and regimes were poorly demarcated, and elites

*Professor, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University.

considered their prospects of holding on to the levers of power to be more important than guaranteeing the security of citizens. Identity was pivotal to violence in the post-colonial world, and, as a result, neither realism nor liberalism could offer satisfactory accounts of violence. The non-West was uncritically admitted as a part of a standard analytical drawing board where grand theories held sway. There was little realization of the fact that the non-Western world had a different genealogy that required sufficient analytical space. Without a proper historicisation of the post-colonial world, it was impossible to explain their violence.

If the ascension of a number of Asian powers is the reason for the creation of a non-Western Asian IR, the promise of a radical departure is futile. This would only turn Asia into a proxy for the non-West, consisting of powers that can successfully rival the dominance of the West. The whole literature on major or rising powers is the best testimony to this. For, if Western powers got their theory right, why should it be any different for the new Asian powers? The real promise of a post-colonial IR does not lie through this route. The logic of power and wealth would create Asian adaptations of realism and liberalism with minor inflections. Robert Cox's immortalised dictum, 'theory is always for someone and for some purpose,' will be faithfully followed by Asian thinkers who would create their own theories for the state. Western IR theory will serve the purposes of rising Asian as it did for their Western counterparts. As Ching-Chang Chen puts it, "While realism, liberalism, and (the pluralist wing of) the English School may indeed speak for the West and in the interest of sustaining its power, prosperity, and influence, the "solution" is not that Asian states should also have an interest in "indigenous" IR theory that speaks for them and their interests, which would only reproduce the very hegemonic logic of dominance which Robert Cox himself has warned against." (Chen 2011: 4).

Acharya and Buzan, whose work has assumed canonical status on non-Western theories, have found IR theory as Western-centric, and insensitive to world history and the different experiences of the non-Western worlds. Their work sought to redress that 'imbalance' by bringing various Asian experiences, culture and history to the domain of IR theory. They advanced five possible explanations for the absence of non-Western IR: Western IR theories are right; they have become hegemonic; non-Western theories are either marginal or concealed; the material and normative structures discourage non-Western IR; and, given the early lead of the Western IR theories, it is tough for the non-Western theory to catch up. (Acharya and Buzan 2010: 16-21). Their research broadly vindicated these factors. My argument is that the real challenge lies in creating a body of theory based on the current historical sociology of the

non-Western states. This exercise would not only provide a new ontological vantage point but also help scholars understand how non-Western experiences and ideas were vital to the making of the Western IR over time. The way the West knew the ‘international’ was not at the theoretical expense of the non-West but rather ‘through’ it. It is this dialectical process that needs to be studied rather than reproducing the sterile binary of the West and East from the other end. The temptation to treat East and West as oppositional entities has got the better of a more balanced and dialectical approach.

We seek to identify what needs to be problematized in the discipline’s interrogation of the non-Western world: the conceptual histories of the nation-state, nationalism, sovereignty, territoriality, security, and identity. The basic argument is this: we require historicising the meanings of the state, nation, the imaginations of political community and the constitution of territorial units upon a pre-existing landscape of a plethora of identities to make sense of the nature and causes of violence and conflicts in the non-Western world. In most non-Western societies, colonialism exorcised most of the erstwhile constitutive idioms and practices, and the idea of the sovereign territorial state and nationalism came to dominate the public or political imagination in these societies, thereby completing the process of globalising the Westphalian project. As a result the non-Western world witnessed, in one form or the other, the inevitable clash between two dynamics, one based on culture and civilization that historically delineated regions of standard reference as space/s of communication and meaning, and the other more modern idea of territorialised, sovereign nationhood, thriving on the principles of exclusivity, differentiation and loyalty. Most of the conflict in the non-Western world remains caught in this bind, precariously poised in the combustible interactions of the two radically different dynamics that are equally active in defining their existential realities. As modernity reinforced the territorial power-speak of the nation-state, the non-coincidence of culture and territory opened up scope for conflicts, whether within or between states, whose explanations require sustained engagement with historical processes and cultural anthropology that had remained outside the normal bounds of academic IR. Many of these conflicts are sustained by fragile and precarious elites who find in the conflict between and within states an invaluable asset to perpetuate their illegitimate rule amidst ever restive and demanding populations. The categories of refugees and internally displaced persons, insurgents, revolutionaries, and mercenaries will not fit into the regular parameters of IR discourses; they hint at a distinctive ontology that requires radical departures from the received heritage.

The peculiarity of geopolitical interests of the post-colonial states must

be read in the nature of the relationship among state, nation, and territoriality relations in the post-colonial world. Identifying the contested process of decolonization as the primary cause of contemporary Asian inter-state territorial conflicts, Itty Abraham analyses the political implications of establishing a fixed territorial homeland as a necessary starting point for both international recognition and national identity. In his words, “In the absence any possibility of meeting the newly sanctified standard of national self-determination, colonial nationalists sought to redefine the prime criterion for independent statehood as unified political control over a defined piece of land, or territorial sovereignty. Once territorial sovereignty was established as the way out of the impossible one-land-people-state trinity, the loss of state territory could become nothing less than the loss of state power.” (Abraham 2014: 12). His conclusion is that states cannot compensate for land as it is vital to the legitimacy of the postcolonial nation-state, which has little to do with their potential for economic gains or imagined narratives of historical memory. In his words, “The core problem with territorial loss is that it opens the door to an excavation of the relationship of state and nation. It exposes the nation as a historically contingent formation and being, and brings into question the state’s claim to represent this nation, now and in the past.”(Abraham 2014: 14).

The post-colonial articulation of the sovereignty has created the ultimate paradox for the elites. They realised immediately the artificiality of their constructs, the historical anomaly involved in this model of the nation-state, and hence, invested entirely in the idea of territoriality, which was much more than mere physical land but was a terrain of political legitimacy for the new state. Borders thus became exclusionary and non-negotiable, and if the space outside was disorderly and dangerous, this was also the *raison d'être* for disciplining the inside lest weakness is exploited by others in challenging the legitimacy of the state led nation-building project that sought to bring about the trinity of the one land-state-people. Abraham argues in the Indian context, “With sovereignty in 1947, fluid imperial boundaries became fixed borders of the nation-state. These borders now incorporated territories and peoples that could not easily be identified as culturally “Indian” and, who, moreover, soon came to define themselves in opposition to a predatory Indian nation-state.” (Abraham 2014: 17). Whether the state has been predatory or not remains debatable. But the general argument that the state’s foreign policy was not merely a matter of realising international or global purposes but also the forging of the national project in peripheral regions remains a sound one.

The most pertinent basis of conflict in the global South remains internal or domestic, arising out of either distributional inequalities or problems of

recognition. The conflation of regime sustenance with the stability of the state, the reification of territoriality, sovereignty, and the absolute rights of states viewed as sole legal representatives of national societies at international forums, and the increasingly state-centric institutionalization of international law that strengthens the inviolability of borders, the ascension of humanitarian law in recent years notwithstanding, have all led to strange forms of asymmetric statism in the non-Western world. These factors, among others, are widely responsible for igniting the most protracted forms of civil conflicts that often assume international dimensions, owing to the blatant contradiction of the dynamics of history and artifice in the shape of Western-inspired sovereign entitlements besieged by the ethnicity. The unresolved questions of identity configured within artificial and rigid state borders compound such conflicts. No conventional paradigm of academic IR, including constructivist engagement of identity discourses, has a comfortable hold over explaining such disputes, given its self-consciously Western genealogy. Hence, what needs to be problematized in the non-Western world is the domestic, for its international relations in general and the discourses of conflict in particular remain firmly rooted in the historical making of the inside.

Postcolonial theory is the best entry point to interrogate the non-Western. IR, therefore, must interrogate the ‘post-colonial’ for a proper understanding of the non-Western world as a precondition to explain its conflicts. As is commonly held, the knowledge of the post can be problematic. It can either signify a period of time, one that begins after the end of colonialism or the formal transfer of political power to the colony, or might refer to orientation, a structure of feeling, or even a form of subjectivity, which transcends the colonial in the ideational and existential sense of the term. In this second reading, political freedom is only a part condition of the post-colonial; more crucial is the ‘real’ snapping of ties with the colonial power in all dimensions of life. Both these readings are partially correct. Till date, most IR scholarship has sought to understand the non-Western world through the meta-narratives of the expansion of modernity, capitalism, or the international society, originating in the West. What is lost in these narratives is the central and constitutive role of colonialism, subjugation, and empire building in the making and unmaking of subjectivities of people who underwent such tumultuous experiences throughout the non-Western world. Neither the colonial nor the post-colonial can be neatly separated. The non-Western world is constituted as much by the economic, political, and materialist practices of the West as by its own contributions to it. The history of the unequal and brutal exchanges between the West and the other is therefore not a one-way process; it came into being qua

a series of complex interactions that together constituted the post-colonial subject. Unless IR faces up to this epistemic challenge of uncovering the genealogy of the non-Western world by engaging with the volatile history of the post-colonial, its ontology will remain severely restrictive and mostly alien to the experiences of the non-Western people who constitute the overwhelming majority of the global population. Unless the post-colonial becomes a legitimate subject of enquiry, the real basis of insecurity and conflict in the post-colonial world will remain shallow and superficial in IR. The meaning of the post-colonial therefore is critical to this field. Sanjay Seth has brilliantly summed up what is at stake here: As he puts it,

‘The “post” in postcolonialism, let it be noted, is not a periodisation that signals the beginning of an era where colonialism is part of the past; on the contrary, it signifies the claim that conquest, colonialism and empire are not a footnote or episode in a larger story, such as that of capitalism, modernity or the expansion of international society, but are in fact a central part of that story and are constitutive of it. The “post” does not mark the period after the colonial era, but rather the effects of this era in shaping the world that is ours. This world was not born out of the West having an impact upon and “awakening” a dormant non-West, but out of both of these being constituted in the course of multifarious (unequal, hierarchical and usually coercive) exchanges, such that neither was left untouched.’ (Seth 2011: 174)

While conceding the need to interrogate the historically mistaken and sociologically naïve ontology that undergirds Western IR, the article nevertheless challenges the view that the epistemological consequence of such a self-reckoning with the discipline must begin with a clean break from the past and lead to the non-Western basis of knowledge as its natural corollary. The non-Western world, in other words, demands ‘non-Western’ forms of knowledge. This epistemological claim, however, is exceedingly difficult, if not outright impossible, to sustain. The fact that dominant interests define what constitutes knowledge, who is the knowing subject, is what can be known on the subject (IR), and how knowledge is acquired, remains fundamentally true. Within IR, this process has led a dominant community of scholars to privilege a positivist and empirical conception of theory, frankly naturalistic in inspiration. For a long time, they maintained their stranglehold in the discipline successfully marginalising alternative approaches. But like every other social science discipline and the humanities at large, IR has also witnessed an unprecedented efflorescence in its methodological and theoretical underpinnings in the last two decades. The inspiration of this variegated impulse has mostly come from

the West. With rational choice problem-solving at one end to post-modernist deconstruction and poststructuralist approaches on the other, there is hardly any space left to erect new theoretical schools. But more crucially, one needs to question the ethnic and geographic meaning of the West invoked as an epistemic term. If in the epistemic sense, the West means the logocentric conception of knowledge of the omnipotent and omniscient White Man, the West then has itself witnessed stiff resistance and outright rebel against such an understanding of knowledge and its underlying correspondence theory of truth. Both assertion and denial connote that the West is understood as a cognitive shorthand. In all aspects of life and across various levels of collective existence, the idea of the West has been problematized and challenged. Postcolonial IR must challenge the ontological parameters of the ‘international.’ However, the ‘nature’ of the ‘challenge’ remains an open question. With a certain degree of trepidation and risking a veritable onslaught from the post-colonial scholars, I remain deeply skeptical about a postcolonial episteme that is fundamentally different from the alleged “Western” discourses. I take the constitution of the international to be a dialectical process where elements of the Western and non-Western experiences cannot be organically separated as distinctive epistemic strands.

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Book Review

The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015) by Dipesh Chakrabarty.

Reviewed by Sudeeptha Ghose*

The first thought that flashes across one's mind, after reading Dipesh Chakrabarty's *The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and his Empire of Truth*, is the precision of the title—it sums it all up. The book narrates the coming into being of *History* as a discipline in colonial India through the character of Jadunath Sarkar and his fixation with facts. Spread over a meticulously penned introduction and eight insightful chapters, it is a journey that concerns about historical research and not a biography of Jadunath Sarkar. Based on about 250 private letters, exchanged from 1907 to 1952 between Sarkar and his comrade-in-arms, Govindrao Sakhararam Sardesai, the book poignantly recounts the anxieties, struggles and tests of these two historians concerning the craft of history writing during the initial days of *History* as a discipline in India. Chakrabarty also draws from other archival sources and refers to anecdotes to project a very balanced assessment of Sarkar's character essential for the purpose of the book. It tempts me to point out here that interestingly, in doing so, Chakrabarty adopts Sarkar's technique of constructing characters of historical figures.

While mapping the birth of *History* as a discipline in colonial India, which was undeniably troubled, Chakrabarty draws attention to the interactions between its "public" and "cloistered" lives and how each patterned the other. Such interactions concerned Sarkar and Sardesai who called for a "scientific" approach based on facts to overcome the limitations of histories emerging from the public domain. They adopted the Rankean model where truth is held sacred and history is to be written without compromising on facts. Chakrabarty identifies this as the most contentious issue between Sarkar, Sardesai et al. on the one hand and scholars of the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal on the other. There were clashes of ideas, bitter debates, personal condemnations and struggles for control over the Indian Historical Records Commission that, according to Chakrabarty, eventually charted the trajectory of the discipline of *History* and institutions associated with it in India. In his lifetime, Sarkar's positivism and

*Assistant Professor in Political Science, Serampore College.

dedication to truth made him resolute enough to accurately document the past—even things unpleasant that could put one to shame. In fact, Chakrabarty observes, Sarkar was against any form of identity politics of nationalism that compromised with truth leading to many intellectual skirmishes and his earning the wrath of anti-colonial nationalist historians. Chakrabarty rescues Sarkar from this ignominy and sets forth to bring out the patriot in him. Sarkar, in Chakrabarty's understanding, was no doubt a patriot though not an anti-colonial nationalist. Chakrabarty elaborates, if Ranke intended to serve God, Sarkar's mission was to serve his nation by writing "scientific" history. Sarkar believed such "scientific" history writing was the first step towards national development and recognising not only the glories but also the tragedies and unpleasant facts of the past would facilitate building a strong nation. And for this, Sarkar was of the opinion that the historian needed to be a person of 'strong character'. Here Chakrabarty makes an interesting intervention. He identifies 'strong character' as a crucial component of Sarkar's historical method and notes that, undeniably a man of strong character, Sarkar himself was a part of his method.

The last chapter deserves a special mention as it is distinct from the rest of the book in style. It is in the form of an imaginary dialogue between Sarkar and the author. Here an imaginary conversation takes place between two historians of two generations and having distinct understandings of *History*. What Chakrabarty does brilliantly is, by staging a dialogue across two moments, he reconstructs the character of Sarkar and clarifies Sarkar's method of history writing and patriotism. The chapter is masterfully crafted and one feels as if a live interview of Sarkar is being taken by the author. Though the two do not see eye to eye during the course of this imagined conversation, one feels there is an attempt to resurrect Sarkar as a historian and herein lay the skills of the author.

In the final analysis, it seems, the spirit of Sarkar hovers over Chakrabarty who adopts Sarkar's method of history writing in this book. Drawing from archival sources and remaining faithful to facts, both pleasant and unpleasant, the author sketches a balanced character of Sarkar to tell a larger story—a technique Sarkar fought for throughout his life. While doing so, the author emphasizes that Sarkar was a child of the empire and many of its abstract ideals shaped his ideas. But one wonders whether it would have been more helpful, for the readers to conjure a clearer image of Sarkar and understand his ideas better, if Chakrabarty took recourse to the category of class and delved more with Sarkar's Bengali middle-class location than making a couple of passing references. This absence, intentional or otherwise, strikes one's mind particularly when one recalls Chakrabarty's use of what he classifies as Bengali middle-class material in his more famous *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial*

Thought and Historical Difference and when one reads his article “Limits of Bourgeois Model?” in Sanjay Joshi’s *The Middle Class in Colonial India*. My point here is not to relate these works of Chakrabarty with the book being reviewed here but to remind the readers of his authoritative understanding of the Bengali middle-class psyche, as evident from these works, and emphasize that they would have benefited more had Chakrabarty elaborated on Jadunath Sarkar and his Bengali middle-class position.

Before concluding this review let us not miss out on something interesting. Two eminent scholars of South Asian origin, namely Dipesh Chakrabarty and Bhikhu Parekh came up with two fascinating books in 2015. Chakrabarty’s book is the one being reviewed here and Bhikhu Parekh’s is *Debating India: Essays on Indian Political Discourse*, a collection of essays written over a span of twenty years. No doubt, the two books have distinct themes yet after reading these, one will be compelled to locate commonalities. Both these books focus on debates from the past taking place in India and reflect on the idea of truth. Also, Chakrabarty’s work, based primarily on letters exchanged privately between two friends, gives us a glimpse of their nature of friendship and Parekh’s book has an exclusive chapter on friendship and its different levels and forms. Furthermore, both have taken recourse to a not so common technique of writing dialogically in a chapter in their respective books—Chakrabarty has a chapter in the form of an interview and Parekh has one in the form of exchange of letters. It leaves one wondering whether these two scholars were themselves in conversation with each other while working on their books!

Book Review

The Darjeeling Distinction: Labour and Justice on Fair-Trade Tea Plantations in India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014) by Sarah Besky.

Reviewed by Sovna Khati*

Tea plantations in India are one of the most labour-intensive industries in India, contributing substantial financial support to the India economy. However, the dismal condition of the tea plantations and tea plantation labourers in India is an established fact and much has been written about it. Sarah Besky in this empirically extensive work has tried to critically look into the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills (subdivisions of Sadar Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong) through the perspective of the tea plantation labourers, which would provide the readers with a deeper understanding of the complexities of tea plantation.

Besky in her ethnographic work conducted for a period of thirty one months over the years from 2006- 2012 has located three important developments in the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills in the 21st century: Geographical Indication (GI) status, Fair-Trade and the resurgence of the Gorkhaland Movement. The author in her work explains why these three important developments have only been partially successful in bettering the conditions of the tea plantations and its labourers. While discussing these three developments extensively in the core chapters of her book, she beautifully explores the relationship between the tea plantation labourers and the landscape in the tea production process.

With her captivating prose style of narration, the author captures the images of Darjeeling tea plantations right from its establishment, the colonial period, till the 21st century, which stands as material symbol of British colonialism. The idea of plantation life, values and social justice which were formed by the colonial masters has been carried into the tea plantations even after independence. However, these notions in the 21st century started getting reshaped by the neo-liberal policies of the state (fair-trade and GI) to fit the tea plantation industry into the global market structure.

The word plantation bears an implicit meaning of exploitation, marginalization and subjugation, of the labourers. It represents a space where the labourers are essentially tied to the plantation land, that provides social stability to the plantation labourers and therefore to the plantation itself. The

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta.

sustenance of the tea plantation has been firmly rooted in its moral economy, which ties the planter and the labourers in an economic bond of reciprocity, an unequal one. Besky has well recognised this aspect of the tea plantation and added the importance of the plantation land in forging the economic bond by calling it to be a Tripartite Moral Economy among the land, labour and the management. This brings her to regard the importance of the non-monetary incentives (houses, ration, medical benefits etc.) which are supposed to be provided by the management to the plantation labourers as established by the Plantation Labour Act 1951, following the colonial dictums. It is these non-monetary facilities that are the very rationale behind the generational existence of the tea plantations labourers in Darjeeling Hills. This Tripartite Moral Economy has internalised an intense bond among the land, labour and the plant, which has helped the tea plantations survive the deteriorating phase especially after late 1970s.

As the title of the book suggests the distinction of Darjeeling as a place is set by its world renowned Champagne of tea called the Darjeeling tea. The distinction of the tea has been properly estimated not just by its market value but also by its social value. In accessing its social value, Besky advocates the recognition of the moral relationship between the tea labourers and the tea plant. To the author, in producing the commodity of distinction, the relationship of the tea labourer and the plant is that of a mother (labourer) and a child (tea plant). This bond of care and nurture between a tea labourer and the tea plant is pivotal in understanding the labourer's view of plantation. With such a notion of care, the labourers view the tea plantation as a landscape of care and concern, which they want the management to assume too. This moral expectation of the labourers, usually not understood by the management of the independent tea plantations creates problems in its stability.

The author acknowledges the 21st century to be vital, to the revitalization of the deteriorating tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills. The policies born out of the neo-liberal global economy started capturing the attention of tea plantations of the hills, particularly in the late 1990s. The important developments are the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for the Darjeeling tea and the Fair-Trade policy. These developments have undoubtedly helped the resurgence of the tea plantations in the hills on a positive note. The GI, an international label for the product, by linking the product to place of origin and production, has protected it from any counterfeit. Under the GI Act of 1999, the Tea Board of India has the ownership over Darjeeling Tea. Similarly, many of tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills are established as Fair-trade farms. This neo-liberal policy sets out to provide social justice to the small farmers of the developing countries by

fetching them fair price for their product. This system tries to do so by removing intermediaries and directly linking the producers to the global consumers.

However, these important policies have not been completely successful in fulfilling their objectives i.e. improving the social and economic conditions of the tea plantation labourers. According to Besky this is mainly because of the lack on the part of these neo-liberal proponents to understand the complex landscape that Darjeeling tea plantation is. These policies to fit into the global market have created what Besky describes Third World Agrarian Imaginary. These concepts have created a romantic imaginary of tea plantations as beautiful natural gardens situated on the serene landscape of the mountainous region of Darjeeling. To make the tea palatable to the global consumers, they tend to naturalize the relationship of tea labour, tea plant and its environment. Thus unmasking the exploitative production process that goes into making the distinguished product of the place, Darjeeling tea. The tea plant brought from China, the immigrant labour force from Nepal and the colonially designed labour relation and production process are naturalised into a heritage craft in the 21st century Indian tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills.

The novelty of Besky's work over other writings on Darjeeling Hills tea plantations is linking the second phase of resurgence of Gorkhaland movement (2007-2011) with the stability of Darjeeling Hills tea plantations. Gorkhaland movement, for the demand of a separate statehood under the Indian union is basically an identity assertion movement. To Besky, the Gorkhas' Indian Nepali identity essentially bears an identity either of tea plantation labourers or that of a military man. Therefore, the tea plantation identity makes the Gorkha identity. The Gorkhaland movement's territorial sovereignty claims centre upon the material and symbolic attachment to the tea plantations which covers most of the area of Darjeeling district. Both the movement and the tea plantation labourers therefore share the same moral concern for the land, that of service and care. However, like the GI and Fair Trade policy, the Gorkhaland movement naturalizes the Gorkha's identity to the landscape. They draw upon the timeless indigenous belonging of the Gorkhas to the land completely negating the historical reality of immigration of the Nepali workforce in India. To the author, this primordial claim to the land detaches the movement from the tea plantation labourers, who very well acknowledges the historical reality of the people and the place. This to the author was one of the reasons for the failure of the movement during its second phase of resurgence.

Thus the GI, Fair Trade and the Gorkhaland movement naturalizes the unjust production conditions and relations between the management and the labourers and mask its exploitative nature. All of the developments of the

modern times fails to provide justice to the tea plantations labourers of Darjeeling Hills as they severely lack the understanding of the notion of social justice and plantation life from the labourer's point of view. This work of Besky is an important piece of scholarly writing on the tea plantations, which enables us to see the complex understanding of the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills as an enterprise and as a landscape as conceived by the labourers of the tea plantations of Darjeeling Hills.

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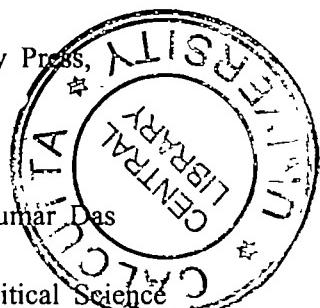
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